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28 GAMES REVIEWED!

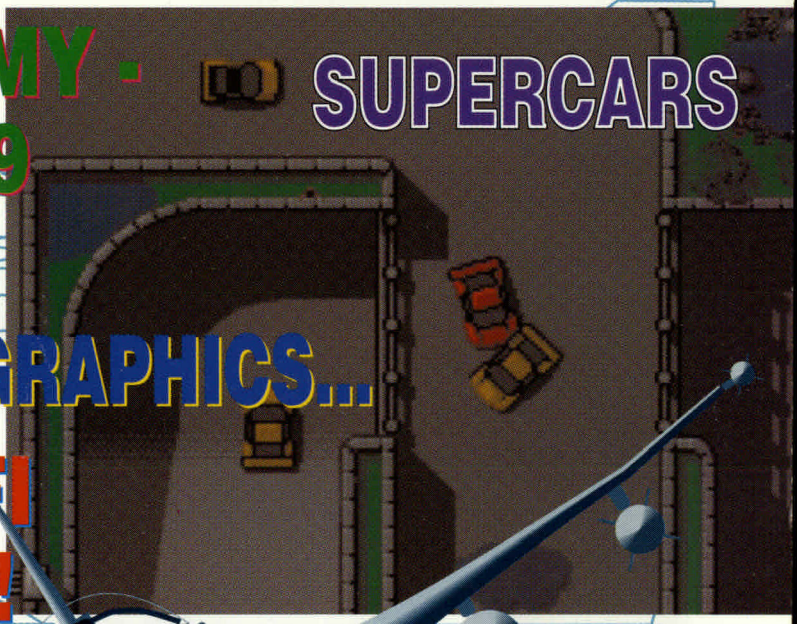
AMIGA ACTION

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★ LOCK ON, TOMMY - BOMBER vs F-29 RETALIATOR

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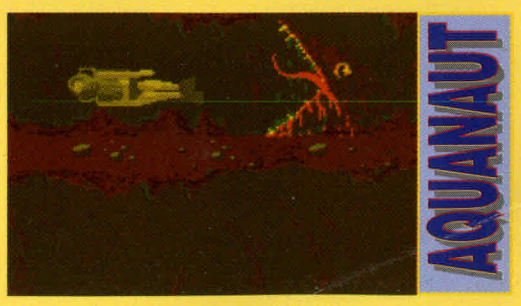












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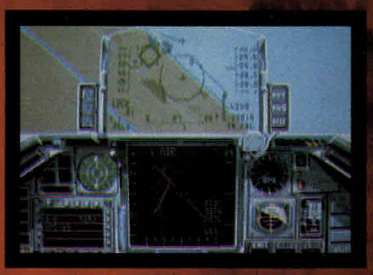
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ST Screen Shots Shown

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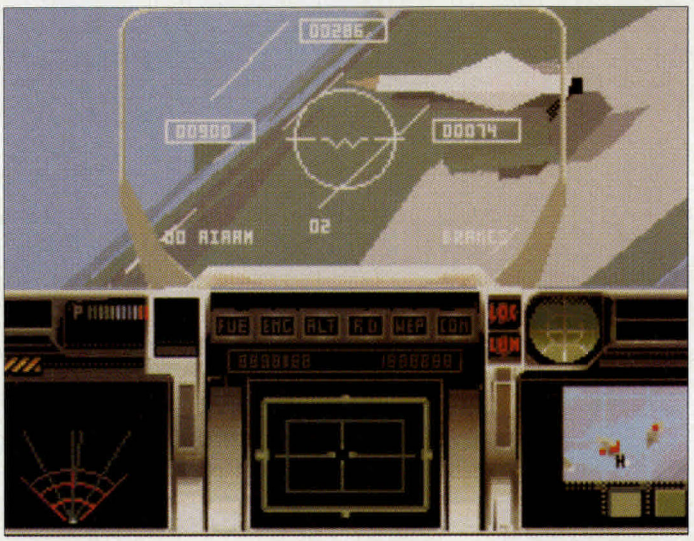
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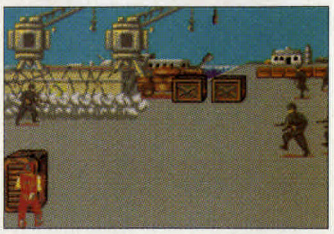
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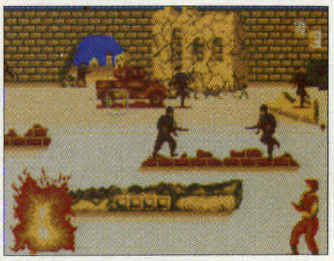
F-29 RETALIATOR

Ocean's first Amiga flight sim takes to the already crowded airways, and blows the competition for six. After so many previews and hype, the game had to be good, but it surpasses our highest expectations.

24







CABAL

Ocean France's conversion of the popular coin-op sees you engaging wave after wave of enemy in combat.

81



AQUANAUT

Go deep-sea diving as you enter the mythical world of Atlantis in Fissionchip's watery follow-up to The Kristal.

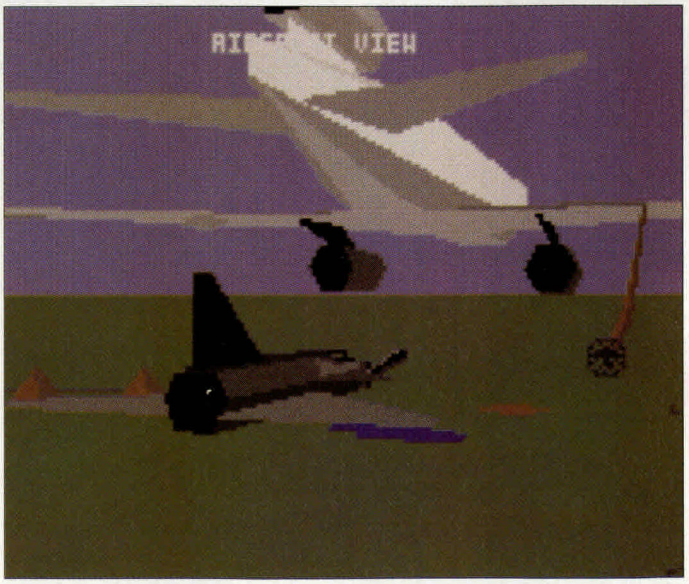
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FIGHTER BOMBER

Activision's long-awaited flight-sim is finally here. After all of the pre-release hype, will it prove to be their finest hour?

36



ENTS

AMIGA ACTION
OVERALL RATING
100%



DRIVIN' FORCE

Digital Magic Software's first release is an amalgamation of practically every race game out - but does it compare to the games it copies? Read on and find out.

64

JUST WHAT IS AN EXCLUSIVE?

Exclusive review! Scoop! How many times have you seen this plastered across the front of computer mags? Here at AA, we have always believed that an exclusive review is one worked out between the magazine and the software house involved to enable us to review a FULLY COMPLETE version of a new game before anybody else. Just recently, however, it seems that games don't actually have to be complete to be reviewed. Instead, getting there first seems to be a priority - even if the game may go through some major changes after it has been reviewed. We are offered the chance to review early versions of games, but tend to shy away from it, as we prefer to review the version that you, the games buyer, will eventually buy. If you disagree with this policy, write in and let us know, but until then, we will stick by our guns to bring you the definitive, in-depth reviews of all the latest Amiga games.

WIN! WIN! WIN!

To tie in with their new release, Pipemania, those nice chaps at Empire are offering a superb Sony CD MIDI system as first prize in our stunning compo. What's more, there are 25 copies of the addictive games on offer, too.

14



SUPERCARS

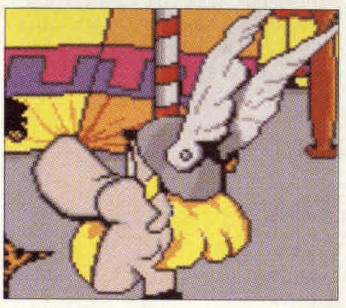
Shaun Southern returns to the racing field with this extremely playable Super Sprint variant. The Amiga Team don their driving goggles and roar off into the sunset.

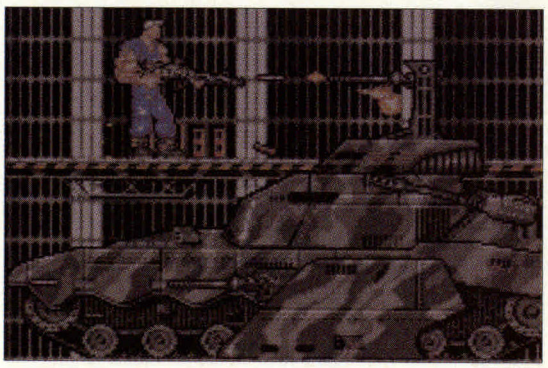
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ASTERIX

Everyone's favourite little Gaul finally makes it to the Amiga in an arcade/adventure that borrows heavily from the popular books.

69





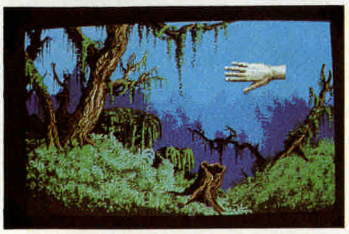
AFTER THE WAR

Gun-toting post-holocaust action from Dinamic, in this two-stage journey through the barren streets of a devastated Big Apple.Can you survive the aftermath of THE war?

30

SNIPPETS

The large, disembodied hand is used to perform various actions, such as picking up and dropping items.



NEW DEAL GET IN ASTATE

The people behind the disappointing Sfari Guns and Fire, New Deal, are set to release what is promised to be `a new concept in adventure games`. This concept involves the impressive piccys shown here, and a simple icon system which is used to manipulate the archaeologist you control. Armed with a metal detector, a drill and other excavating objects, you are on a mission to retrieve five parts of a lost statue. Various clues can be found to aid your task, and you will need to keep your wits about you to avoid the many hazards that you will encounter. It`ll be out soon, priced 19.95.



Rumour has it that the deserted church holds a clue to the whereabouts of the statue pieces - dare you enter?

ALL CHANGE AT SUNNY GP

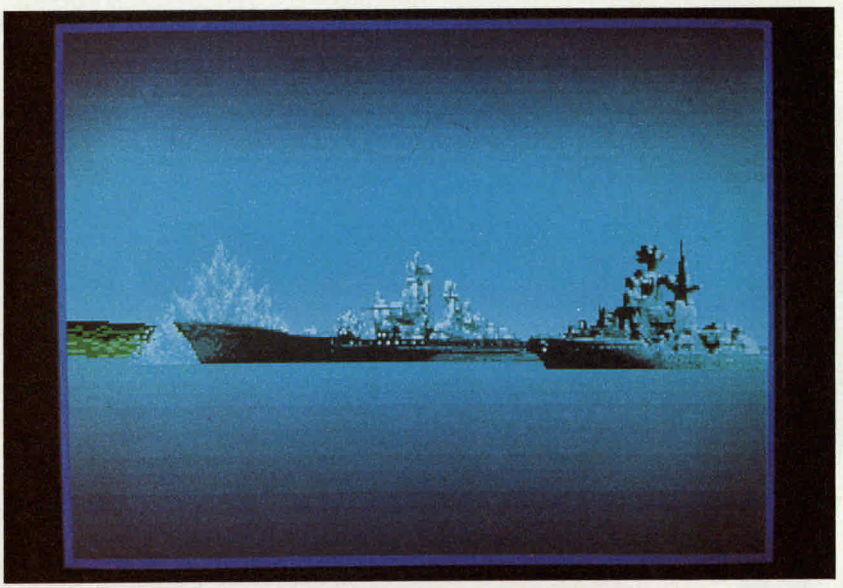
The more observant of you will have noticed that on the contents page, the name Gollner Publishing has been replaced the new-fangled sounding, Interactive Publishing. Basically, what has happened is that, in a mind-boggling merger, good old GP has got even bigger and better. This means that you can expect some pretty big changes to the lovely mag you are now reading - including more pages, etc. One thing's for sure, the best is about to get even better! Stick around!

DIVE! DIVE! DIVE!

One of Electronic Art`s hottest PC products is about to hit the Amiga. 688 Attack Sub enters the already-bustling field of submarine simulations, and is ready to face the competition from Microprose`s long-awaited Red Storm Rising game. As the Captain of either a Russian or American sub, you are given the responsibility of the smooth running of the sub and several vital missions. With a crew of roughly a hundred men, you must delegate various important and menial tasks, whilst concentrating on the destruction of key enemy bases and forces. The game uses digitised pictures of all the various crew members and important scenes and, an element of realism, each member of the crew has been given his own `personality` and some will succumb to irrational and unpredictable behaviour under pressure, whilst others will keep a cool head but have other weaknesses - it's up to you to find out who'll ne most suitable for what. With ten different missions under your authority, you will be able to don your Captain`s uniform when the game is released in March, priced at EA`s usual £24.99.



With each member of the crew having his own personality, only trial and error will help you find out which men are suited for which job. But it is vital that you get it right.

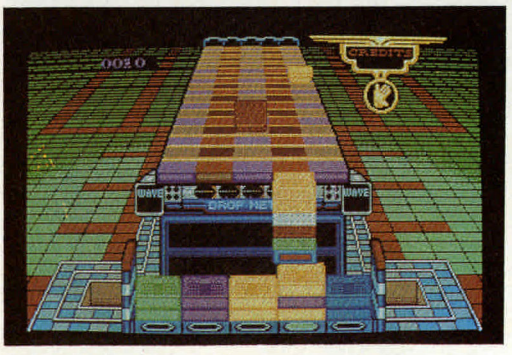


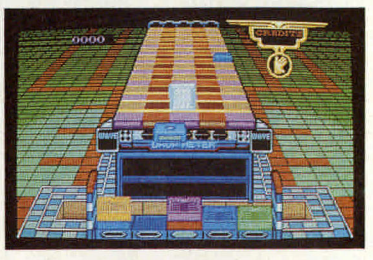
Uh-oh! The enemy fleet is getting closer, and are depth-charging the area in an attempt to root you out. Quick thinking and use of your limited resources are needed here - are you up to the job?

KLAX ENTERTAINMENT

In something of a coup, Domark are about to release a conversion of a new Atari coin-op to coincide with the machine`s launch. Klax is a simple puzzle game along the lines of Tetris, and involves catching and sorting coloured tiles as they roll down the screen. The aim of the game is to sort the tiles into three lines of the same colour. These lines can be made horizontally, vertically or even diagonally, and the successful completion of a line results in the line disappearing, leaving more room for other tiles. As you progress and get better, more and more tiles appear at greater speed, and the game starts to get really tricky. Like Tetris, Domark assure us that the game will have that `one more go` feel to it, but you can see for yourself when it is released next month, priced £19.95.

As the tiles roll towards you, up to five can be stored on each paddle. However, if things get too frantic flip the tiles back up to the conveyoy belt.

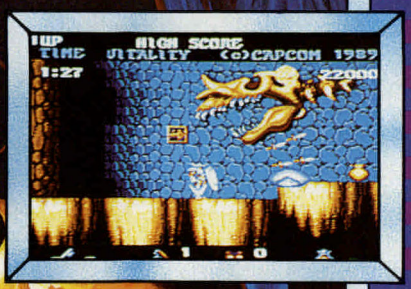




Big points are to be gained by lining them up diagonally.

THEY ARE THE DEMONS & DRAGONS OF HELL – YOU ARE THE....

BLACK TIGER™



Screen shot from Atari ST version.

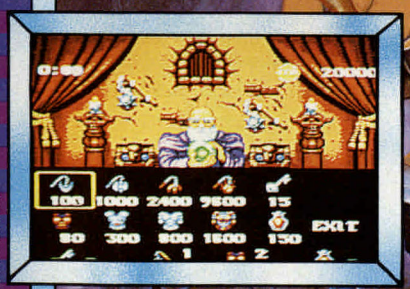


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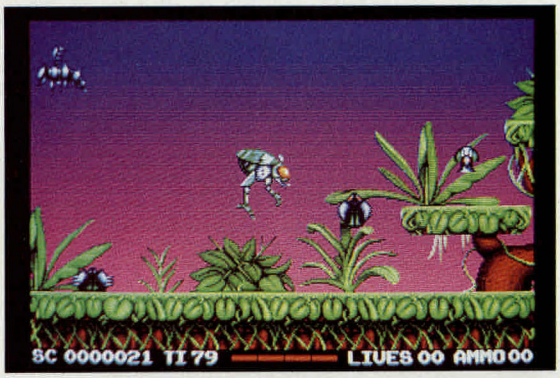
RAMROD AT LAST!



Ramrod or Rambot`s progress through the multi-layered stages is achieved using the many lifts and slopes that decorate the area. Care must be taken not to stumble off the edge of a platform, though, as a fall will either stun or kill you.

Roughly two years ago, Gremlin announced an up-and-coming mega-game, the likes of which they promised we had never seen before. Now, after many promises and delays, it seems like the long-awaited project is set for release in March. Controlling one of two technically-advanced characters (one of whom is the Ramrod of the title), you must do your utmost to ensure that the characters don`t get bored. To combat this boredom, you must scuttle around the isometric landscape, avoiding contact with the many enemy creatures that patrol the levels, and collecting money to play on the many coin-ops that are scattered throughout the game. In addition, if your boredom level is getting dangerously high, cans of Pepsi can be bought to buy you more time. Everything in Ramrod is out to get you, and the perils range from the said creatures to deadly precipices and traps. However, should you successfully complete the four coin-ops (which are shoot`em-ups for the most part) that are on each level, then you will be granted access to the next stage. We are hoping to have Ramrod for review next month, but we can`t promise anything!

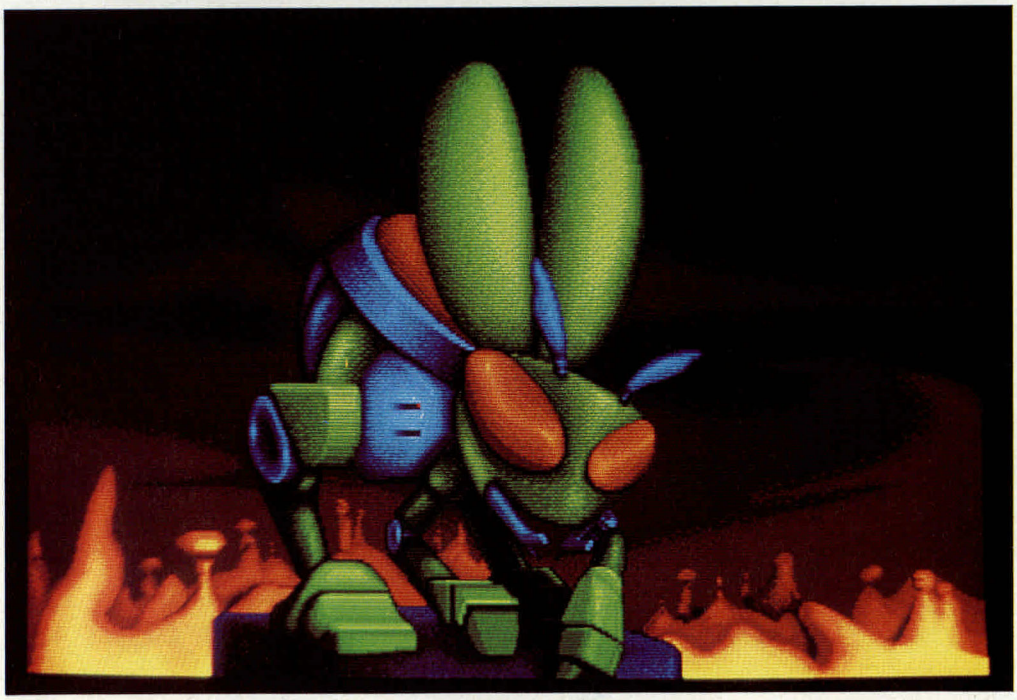
Actually, whilst on the subject of Gremlin, expect to see their new release, Venus, very soon. Given the role of a sticky-footed fly, you have been sent out to destroy a rogue virus and any of the insects it has infected. To do this, you are armed with a gun (some fly, that - ED), and what follows is a shoot`em-up set over many superbly-coloured screens. Each stage is choc-a-bloc with platforms and nasties, and these must be either hopped over or shot with your powerful built-in armaments. Shading has been used to very good effect in Venus, as the screenshots show, but how it plays will be revealed when it is released in March.



Approaching two mutant beetles, the fly lowers itself to let rip with its inbuilt weaponry.



Having completed the four coin-ops, Ramrod is collected by a glass sphere and transported to the next stage.

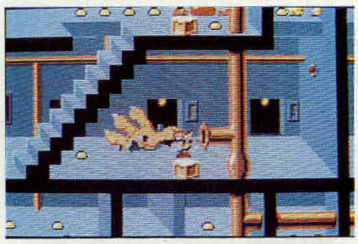


Ready for take-off, the fly prepares itself for battle.

SNIPPETS

YIP, YIP TOYOTTE!

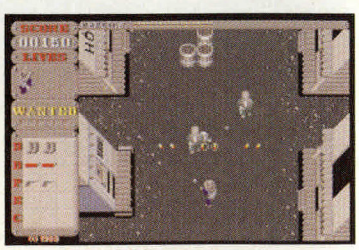
In the past, Infogrames have based some brilliant games around French cartoons. Next up to join the ranks of North and South and Stir Crazy, you can expect to meet the Toyottes - a race of purple rats who are the only survivors of a nuclear war. Assuming the role of several key members of the cartoon, you must make your way through five, totally different levels as you progress towards the treacherous planet surface. Mutated creatures attempt to eat our cheese-eating heroes, and quick reflexes will be needed to make your way through the maze and platform-laden screens. So far, Toyottes is looking quite nice, and we hope to review it next month (now where have I said that before?).



An oh-so-cute Toyotte avoids the unwanted attention of a big cat`s hand.

BUDGET NEWIES FROM SMASH 16

Anyone looking for a bargain piece of software has got two new titles to look out for. Smash 16, Interceptor/Pandora`s budget label, have released the Infogrames` titles, Captain Blood and Outlaw at 4.99. Outlaw is the new name for the neat vertical scroller, Wanted, and at a fiver is a steal. Captain Blood, on the other hand, is a surprise budget release. Released by Infogrames over eighteen months ago to critical acclaim, it involves locating and destroying several clones of yourself to save yourself. Well worth a look for a fiver.



A retitled Wanted makes a welcome return - this time for under a fiver.

LOCK & LOAD

MAGNUM 4

AFTERBURNER – You've played the arcade smash – now experience the white-knuckled realism of a supersonic dogfight at home!
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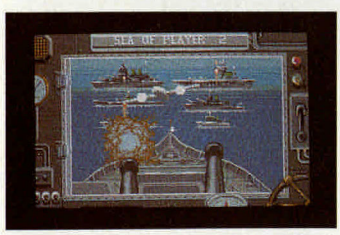


TOMAHAWK HEAD FOR DAKAR

After the disappointing desert race game, African Raiders, Coktel Vision`s other label, Tomahawk, will be releasing another game based on the famous Paris to Dakar race. Starting at Paris, your journey will take you over 5000 miles of assorted race ground, ranging from the bustling Parisian streets to the desolate plains of the Sahara Desert. The race will feature a number of options, and as well as the race action, the player will have to choose the vehicle they think most suitable, along with a suitable amount of supplies, and, of course, a route must be plotted and adhered to. In addition, by way of a promotion, Tomahawk are offering a brand new Peugeot 205 for the person who amasses the best score. The Paris-Dakar Rally game will be out in January, priced at 24.99, and the closing date for high-scores will be at the end of April.

HEWSON`S THIRD BIG PREMIERE

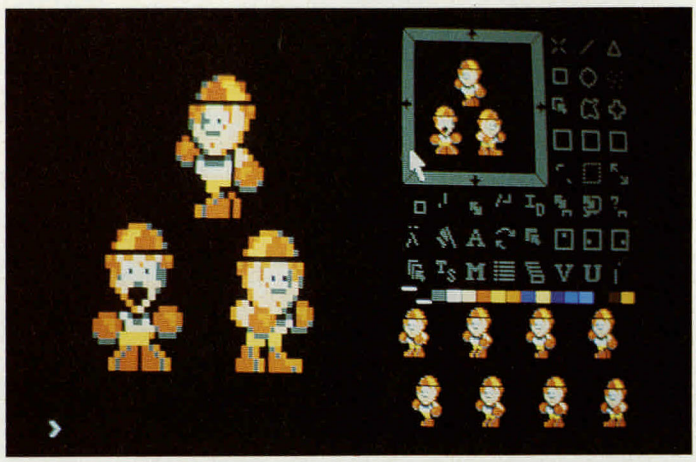
Just announced is the third of Hewson`s Premiere Collection compilations. This time, the games featured are Logotron`s puzzler, Quadralien; Elite`s neat conversion of the boardgame, Battleships; another Logotron game, this time the innovative and decidedly surreal, Archipalagos; and the token Hewson game, Tony Cooper`s conversion of Cybernoid II. Priced at 29.95 it should be out now.



`You`ve sunk my battleship!` Elite`s underrated boardgame conversion returns on the latest Premiere Collection.

LOGOTRON GO

Tim Closs`s cartoon-style Kid Gloves sprites are being drawn using Rainbird`s Art Sudio on the ST, before being ported over to the Amiga and improved.

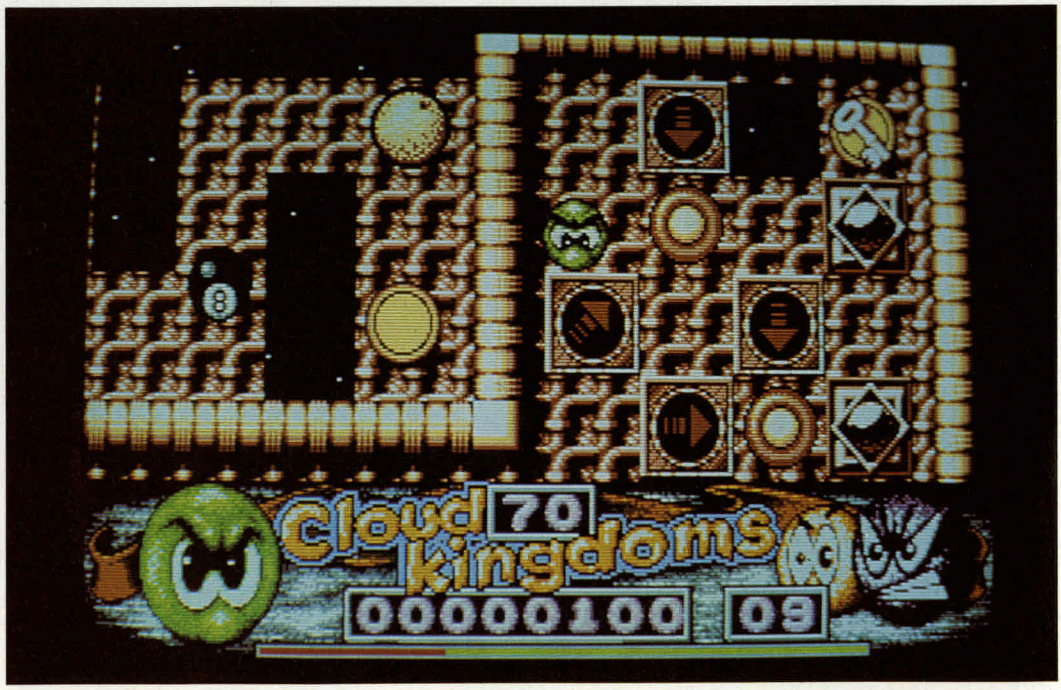


Following on from the blood`n`guts blasting action of Bad Company, Logotron are opting for a more sedate pace with their next two releases. Like a lot of people, it seems that the guys at Logotron hanker for the days when games relied on their playability rather than their astounding graphics and stunning sound. Thus, their next two releases will be more simplistic than up-and-coming games, such as Resolution 101 - and, when you take into account the playability of games like New Zealand Story and Rainbow Islands, it seems that they could be right. The two games are both due out in March, and the first one is called Kid Gloves. Kid Gloves follows the adventures of our pint-sized hero, the Kid of the title, as he wakes up in a strange jungle. All he can remember is searching through an old chest and finding a pair of boxing gloves, then, somehow, he awoke to find himself in the said paradise. The game is billed as a cross between Bomb Jack and Rick Dangerous, and involves guiding Kid through several screens of unchartered and platform-laden jungle. Numerous creatures will attack Kid, but luckily there are plenty of extra weapons and magic spells for him to fight back with. The game is being written by Tim Closs, the brains behind Firebird`s 8-bit budget hits, I-Ball and I-Ball 2, and boasts five different levels complete with collectable coinage with which the extra weapons and things can be bought.

Also expected at that time, is Cloud Kingdoms, a roll-around game in which you control a fuel-injected rubber ball as he scrolls across thirty-two stages of mayhem. Cloud Kingdoms is set up above the clouds, and your little spheroid must roll and



Reaching the end of the jungle, Kid is attacked by a massive ogre. Only repeated shots or one of his magic spells can save him now...



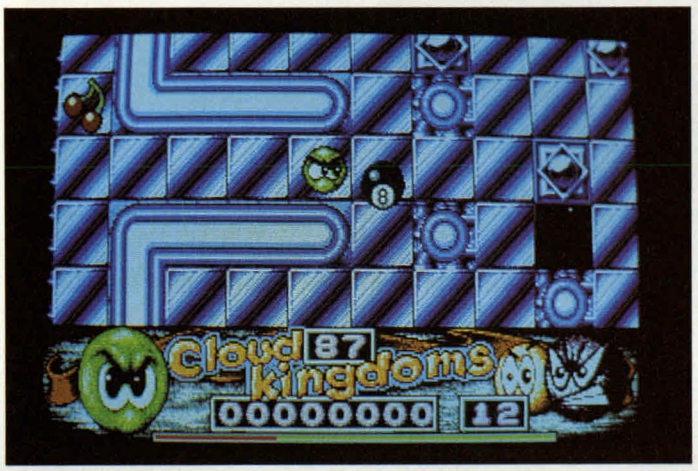
Those arrowed tiles send the ball rolling in that direction, so he must use them to his advantage to reach that handy key.

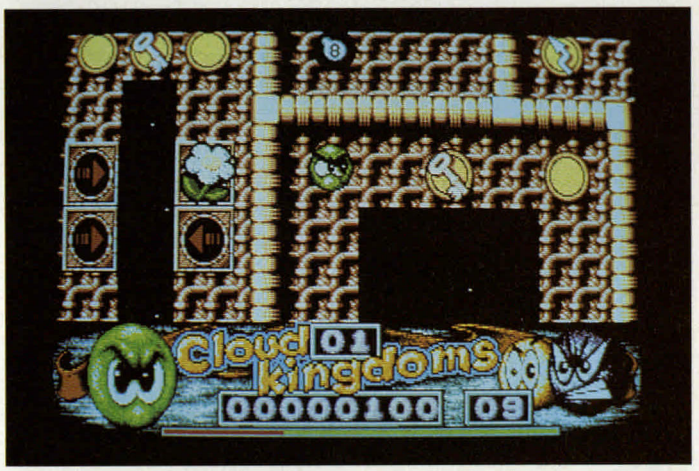
FOR PLAYABILITY

bounce his way across the eight-way scrolling heaven, collecting gems, fruit and other goodies, whilst simultaneously avoiding the many traps that dot the area and the menacing creatures that pursue you. Each level will feature several layers of the ever-popular parallax scrolling, giving a feeling of depth as you view the action from a bird`s-eye view, and these layers will diminish as you fall down through the levels, until you eventually drop out of the sky. However, if you successfully collect every one of the scattered goodies, access to the next stage will be given. Logotron are confident that this game will prove more addictive than Nintendo`s Super Mario Brothers, but you can find out for yourself when it is released at the same price as Kid Gloves.

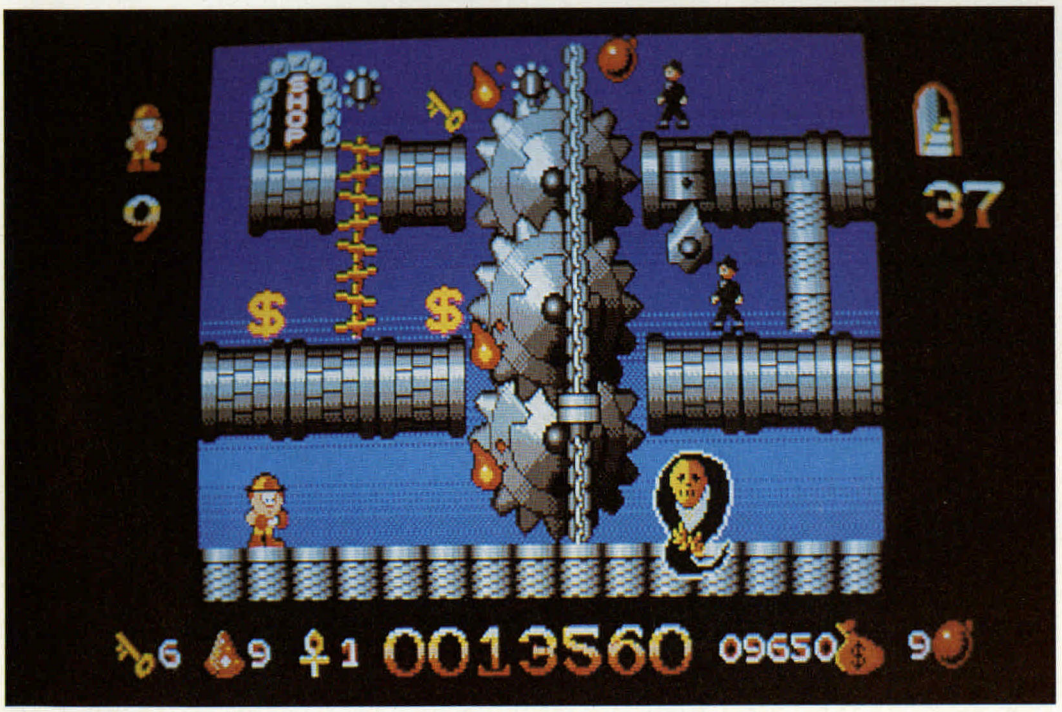
Following both Kid Gloves and Cloud Kingdoms, Logotron have also got a number of new titles on the way. Resolution 101, the new game written by Astral, will be out for an April release and is so far looking quite impressive, and the team behind Chase H.Q. will be writing a fast racing game sometime in the future. Also, the 3D Galaxians game, Starblaze, just missed out on a review this month. From what we have seen so far, the 3D is very smooth, with the aliens whizzing past your view-screen in ultra-smooth 3D. To find out how it plays, though, you'll have to stay tuned for the next super, sizzling issue of Amiga Action.

If only our green rubber hero can get a decent run-up, he may be able to knock that pesky 8-ball through the hole in the Cloud Kingdom to its death.





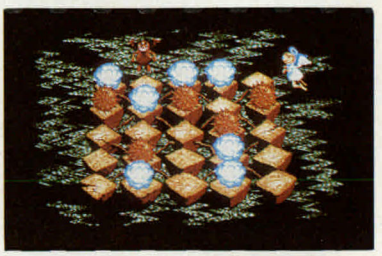
Each level features attractive and detailed backdrops, but even that can`t stop our rubber champion from frowning. Logotron are comparing its playability to the likes of Bubble Bobble and N.Z. Story, check out the review in a month or two's time to find out.



Kid must make his way to the top of the screen so that he can buy some extra lives and weapons. However, with only one life left, and that great hulking machinery in the middle of the screen, it could prove tricky.

SNIPPETS

The devilish computer-controlled player uses one of his spikey counters to move the angel`s poofy fluffy ones.

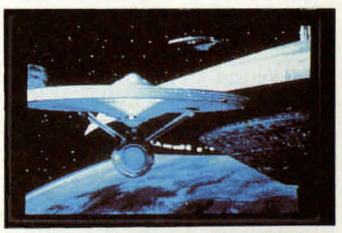


TIC TAC TOE FROM ART OF DREAMS

Art of Dreams are a new French company, and their first release is Antago, a puzzle game along the lines of noughts and crosses. Playing either an angel or a devil, you must attempt to place a row of five counters across the board. However, this seemingly easy task is made harder by the cheating computer, and he is not averse to knocking you or your counters off the board. There are a number of different boards and opponents to pit your wits against, as well as a brilliant computer-controlled opponent. It`s due for a March release, so expect a review, hopefully, next month.

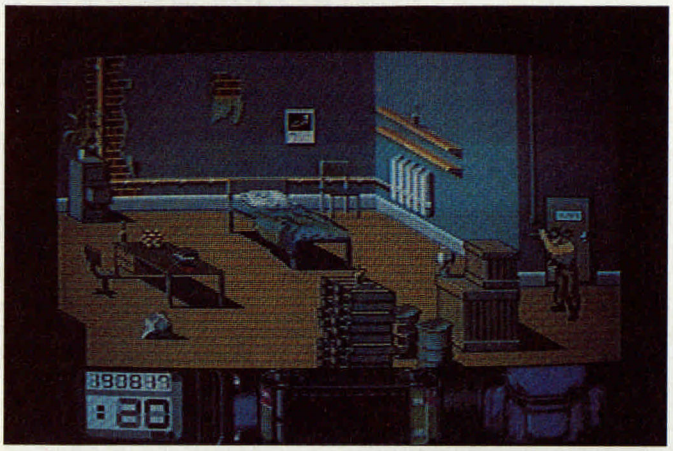
BEAM US UP SCOTTIE

Mindscape`s graphic extravaganza, Star Trek V, will be beaming down to an Amiga near you very soon. Featuring stills digitised from the actual film, Star Trek V follows the adventures of Kirk and his loyal crew as they battle against the warmongering Klingons. As Kirk, you can interact with all of your crew and must ensure that not only is the Enterprise running smoothly, but that you achieve your objective of destroying the Klingons, too. It`ll be out in time for Easter, priced around the thirty quid mark.



`Scotty, charge up the Dilithium crystals while I throw this polystyrene boulder at that man in the rubber outfit.` `Och, the engines cannae take it, Cap`n, she`s gonna blow.`

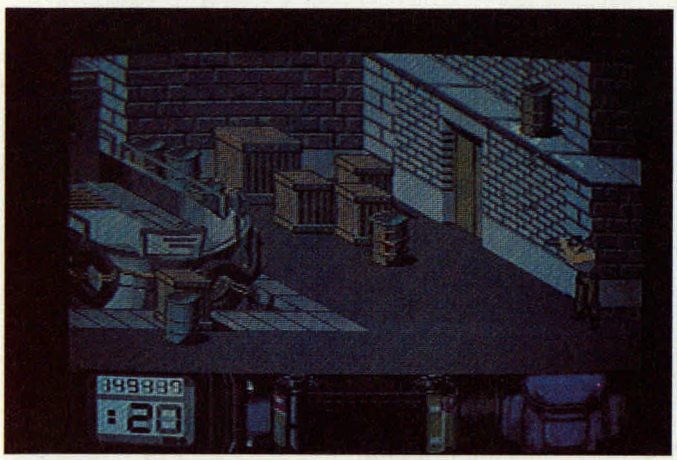
This very early shot of Vendetta sees our muscular hero stalking through the ramshackle enemy base searching for clues to the whereabouts of the missing hostages.



V IS FOR VENDETTA

A student-formed terrorist group has taken an eminent scientist and his daughter hostage, and are demanding various unreasonable demands. A video has been sent to the authorities, showing the frightened couple seated next to a small nuclear device, and unless their demands are met the students are threatening to explode the bomb. Several clues have been left as to the whereabouts of the terrorists` base and, accordingly, a mercenary has been sent to track down clues and eventually eliminate the menace.

Thus tells the story of System 3`s latest arcade/adventure, Vendetta. Assuming the role of the beefcake mercenary, you are given one life with which to make your way through the four levels of the game, killing the armed guerillas, and collecting useful objects to aid your mission. The game is split into two sections, the first of which is depicted in Last Ninja-style isometric graphics, whilst the second part is more of a sub-game, and involves tearing across busy roads in your sleek F40 in an attempt to reach the terrorist before the shrinking time-limit expires. Work is at a very early stage at present, but hopefully Vendetta will be out for an October release. A price has yet to be set.



Raising a collected bazooka to his shoulder, the lone mercenary prepares to wipe out the terrorist search party.

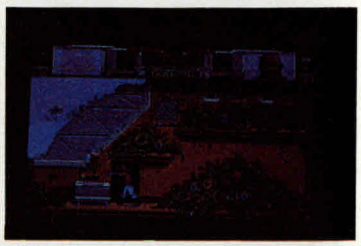
OOPS CORNER

Uh-oh, it's slappy wristy time! The more observant amongst you may have noticed a review of a game called Aladdin's Magic Lamp. Well, there was a slight mistake in that review. The price of the game was shown as £19.95, when it in fact sells for a meagre £9.95. A big sorry and lots of humble apologies to everyone at New-Line Software for any trouble incurred, and we'll be extremely careful not to let it happen again - and just to make sure, we have shot the silly bugg... person responsible (again).

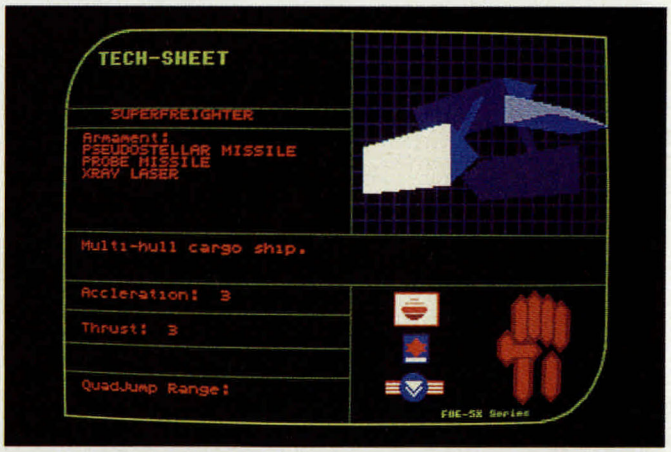
SONIC BOOM BOY

Following on their past success with Sega coin-op conversions, such as Powerdrift and, to a lesser extent, Afterburner, Activision are set to convert Sonic Boom, an action-packed vertical scroller. An evil fanatic group have taken over key military bases, and in your futuristic plane, you have been sent to eliminate them. All the usual features are there: bonus weaponry, extra lives - you name it. In addition, there is also a mode for simultaneous two-player games. It`ll be out in March.

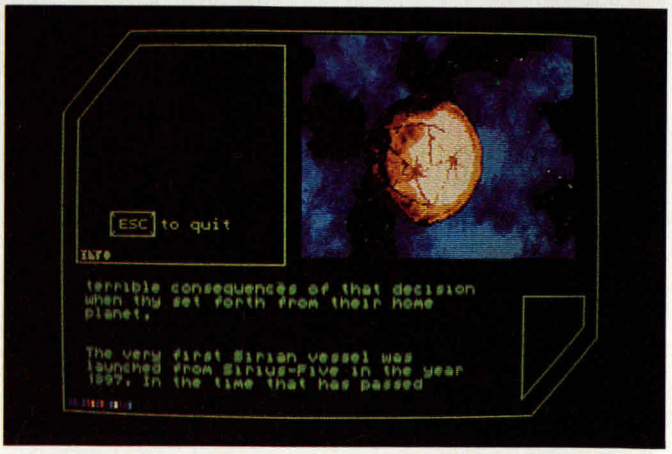
Also due around that time is Hammefist, the long-awaited beat`em-up-cum-arcade/adventure from Vivid Image. Vivid Image is made up of John Twiddy, Mev Dinc and Hugh Riley, and this forceful trio are probably best known for their innovative work on the C64 versions of the Last Ninja games. Featuring the same, high-quality graphics of the Last Ninja games, Hammerfist places the player in the combat boots of a fighting machine. Apparently, two holograms were accidentally fused together during a routine experiment, and you, the eponymous Hammerfist, are the result. Equipped with a built-in bionic arm and all manner of weapons, you must make your way through the alien-infested land until you reach the factory building responsible for your accident. Once in, a tour of destruction begins as you eventually smash the place up. Finally, the next release for the near future is Warhead, a space sim set in the not-too-distant 21st century. With over 39 separate missions and countless options, Warhead has already got our mate, Doug ' Super Chopper Boy' Johns, drooling with anticipation, but he`ll have to wait for at least another month until it is released.



With three built-in weapons, including his pounding `Hammerfist`, Activision`s eponymous hero is set for some serious destruction.



Warhead features a whole host of user-friendly options, and allows the player to read up on all the ships they will encounter.



Such is the attention to detail in Warhead, that each planet in its galaxy is catalogued.

MIRRORSOFT'S SEQUELS

Yeah! Here at Amiga Action we are justifiably proud. Why? Because we were one of the first groups to complete the Cinemaware epic, It Came from the Desert, that`s why! And now, to keep us going until the next epic, Cinemaware are releasing a data disk to complement It Came, called Ant Heads: It Came From the Desert II. Five years have passed since Lizard`s Breath fell foul of the unwanted attentions of some mutated giant ants, but an unknown scientist bravely took on the massive insects and won. Suddenly, the quiet is dispelled by disturbing rumoured spottings of more of the giant ants. What`s more, the locals believe that it is the government Atomic Testing program that is responsible. The disk will be priced 14.99 when it is released in February. And just what are the strange goings-on at Melville Hospital? Why aren`t people being allowed to see the patients there? Also, where did the consignment of stolen plutonium go? Did it have anything to do with Brick Nash`s dumped vehicle near Doctor Well`s old laboratory near the mountains? Find out soon - hopefully, in time for the next issue.



The ants return when strange goings-on at the Atomic Testing centre cause them to make a comeback in It Came From The Desert II.



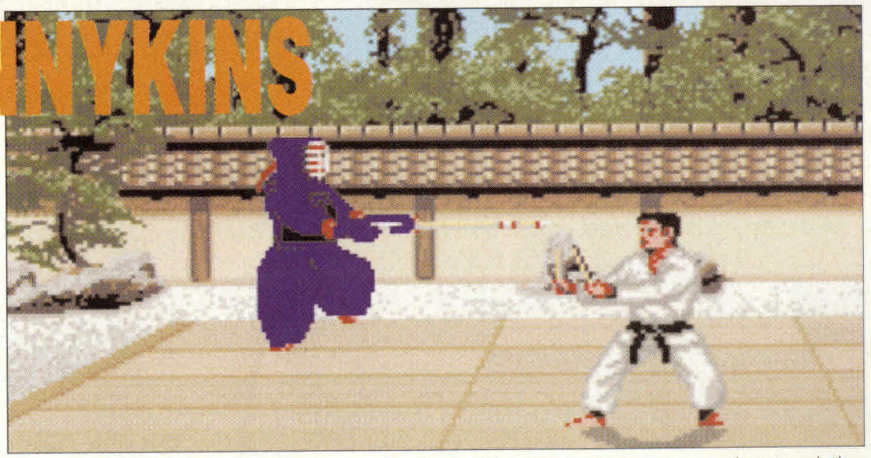
Also, fans of the ever-popular and successful Bitmap Brothers can look forward to the long overdue sequel to Speedball. Unoriginally titled Speedball II, the game`s play area has been increased twofold, and the player will be given more control over the various statistics of the Speedball players. Dan Malone, ex-graphics man with Palace (and, apparently, the UK`s skateboarding champion), is providing the graphics for Speedball II, but at the moment the game is only at the planning stage. More news as we have it.



Speedball II looks set to out-hype even Xenon II.

EA`S BUNNYKINS

Oops, sorry, that should be Budakan! Budakan is a new multi-stage martial arts extravaganza from Electronic Arts. As a novice fighter, you must train in and master each of the fighting styles available, and beat a number of opponents to prove your skill. In all, there are twelve fighters to confront, each of whom gets harder than the last as their and your skills improve. In addition, once you have proved your skills, you can go back to the city where you practised your skills and train up on new methods of combat, including bare-knuckle fighting.



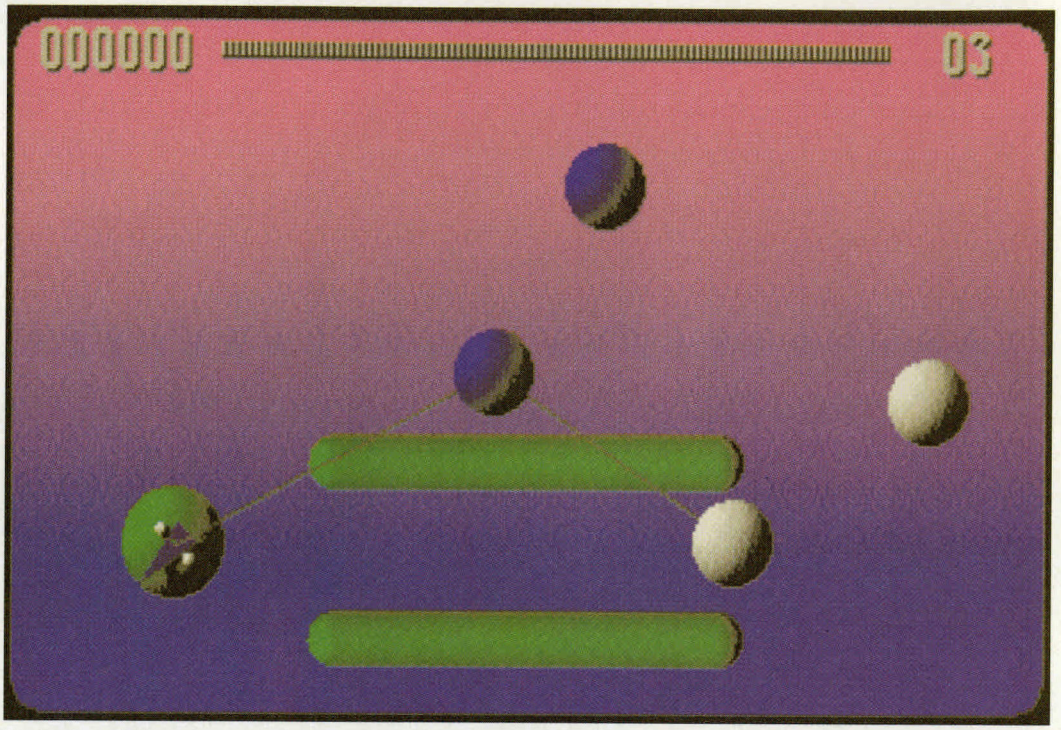
Each of the skills in Budakan features a number of superbly animated moves, all of which are easily accessible via the joystick.

The version we have seen sports some incredible animation, and EA boast that there are twenty-five genuine moves to perform. In addition, each of the moves is easily obtainable, although some are only accessible when your character is holding a certain stance. Like the real thing, to be a true fighter, you must understand the philosophy of what you are learning, and your tutor interrupts each lesson to teach you a meaningful lesson. Full review in our very next issue.

U.S. GOLD CRACKDOWN AS THEIR

Coming soon from U.S. Gold is E-motion, a game about balls. Programmed by the Assembly Line, who seem to have addictive puzzle games off to a tee (just wait until you play Pipe Mania), E-motion is a very simple affair in which you have to bounce balls against others of the same colour. Now this would be very simple, but if a ball of a different colour collides with another, a smaller ball appears, which, given time, will grow into a bigger ball. In addition, each ball has a very short fuse, and unless you can clear the screen of them, they will explode, taking most of your ship`s energy with them. In addition, on later levels, elastic links the balls and obstacles are added just to make things that little bit harder. We have seen a near-completed version of the game, and it has to be said that it is extremely playable. The control system of your ship is akin to the rotate/thrust method in Blasteroids, but allows some superb pixel-perfect manoeuvring to be made. It`ll be reviewed next month, and released shortly after.

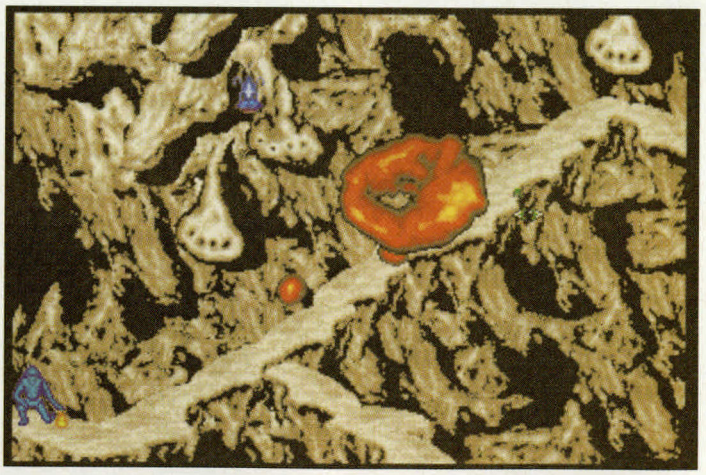
Also coming from the Brummie wonders is a new RPG called The Knights Of The Crystallion. Written in the states, Crystallion was written, designed and programmed by one guy, a certain Bill Williams. The object of the game is to enter the city of Orodid and find one of the Brain crystals, so that you can build your own crystallion. Various mental tests will have to be passed first to improve your psionic powers, and a special suit of armour will have to be fashioned as well. During this you must also keep a beady eye on your family and make sure they are well fed, and that the family business doesn`t go down the drain. The game is made up out of several sub-games, which range from an extremely playable variation on Concentration (you know, that dull quiz show hosted by Bob `my career went down when Spit the Dog left me), in which you have to prove your powers of mental ability by matching up cards; and attempt a maze test in which you must collect the all-important crystals to power your suit whilst avoiding the clutches of evil gem grabbers and lizards. Each of the tests is



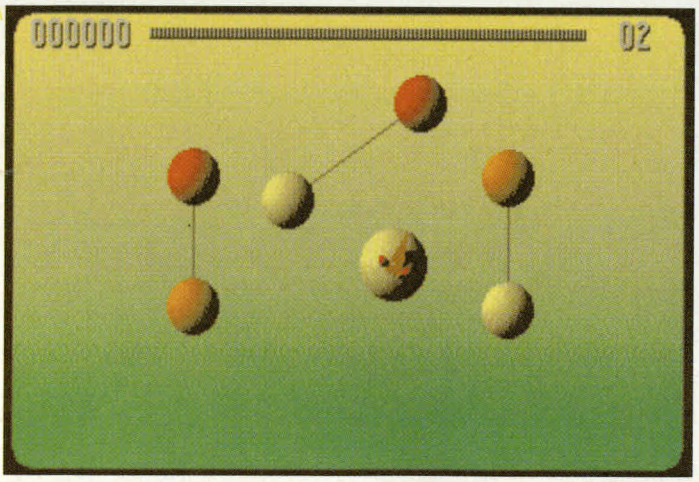
To look at this screenshot, you wouldn`t think that there is anything particularly special about E-motion - but just you wait till you play it - it`ll drive you loopy with its simple but infuriating gameplay.



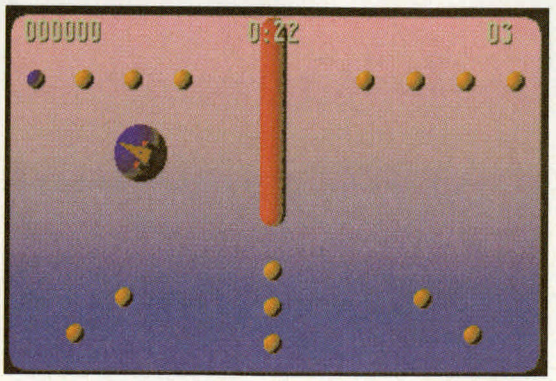
Selling goods to earn a crust is essential to stay alive in Crystallian - but it`s certainly not easy when you`ve got twenty-odd kids to feed!



Our lone hero wanders through a dark chamber whilst attempting to collect gems that will power his suit in the innovative Knights of the Crystallion.

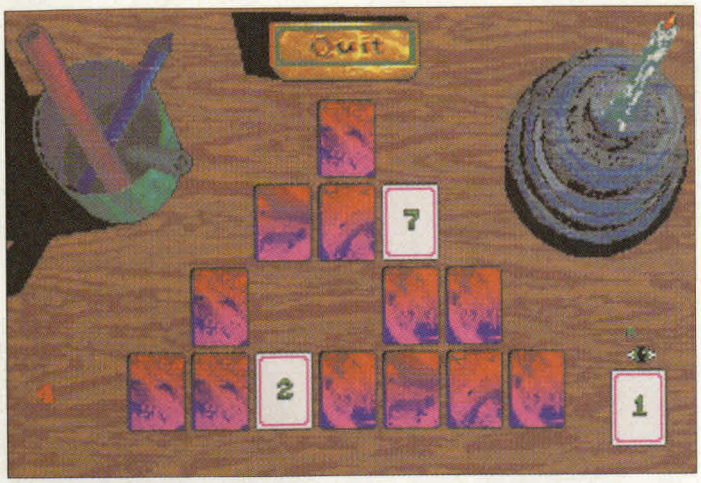


On later levels, E-motion throws in items, such as elastic and obstacles to confuse you, and these normally result in a sudden influx of small balls as balls of the wrong colour collide against each other - still, if you are quick, the small balls can be collected for extra energy.



There are fifty levels to E-motion, each of which is interrupted by one of four tricky bonus stages.

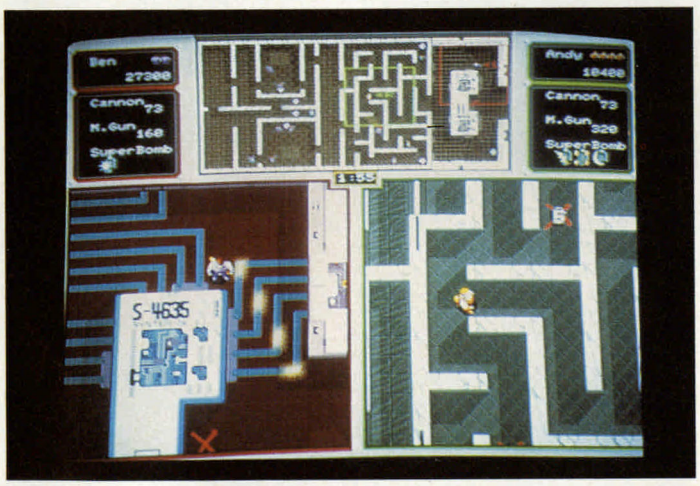
BALLS DROP

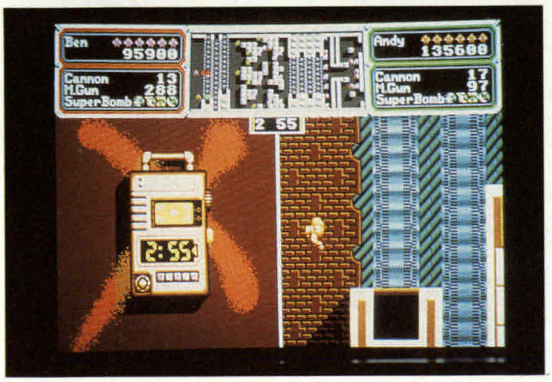


To prepare your mind for the arduous task ahead, one of the sub-games involves matching sets of cards as quickly as possible - a la Concentration.

integral to the completion of the game, as is the succssful running of your business, and you`ll be able to see a full review of this stunning-looking and sounding game when we review it next month.

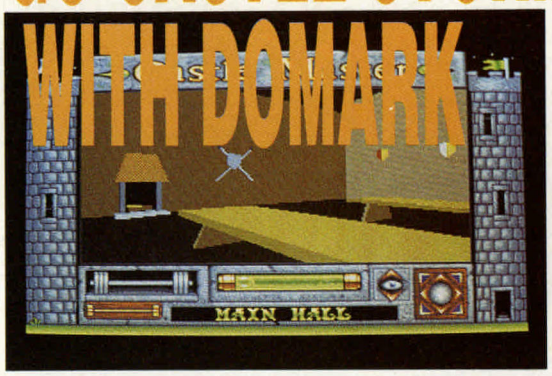
Finally, another game to expect for a review next month is Arc`s conversion of the Capcom coin-op, Crackdown. Delayed from its Christmas release, Crackdown is a one or two-player game in which you play one of two heroes out to kill the evil Dr. K. Dr. K, however, is none too keen on the idea of being offed, and had filled each of the eight levels that comprise his domain with deadly gun-toting robots and guards. Whilst running the gauntlet of these guards, you must pick up the various weapons that are scattered throughout the levels and plant bombs in strategic positions around the building. Once four bombs have been laid in each level, Dr. K`s evil empire will explode and your task will be over. The conversion is looking very close to the coin-op, with the two-player mode offering a bigger challenge and a more enjoyable game. It`ll be priced at the usual £24.95 when it is released in May.





Following their successful conversion of Forgotten Worlds, Arc look set to triumph again with their conversion of Crackdown - the coin-op is the top shot.

GO CASTLE STORMING WITH DOMARK

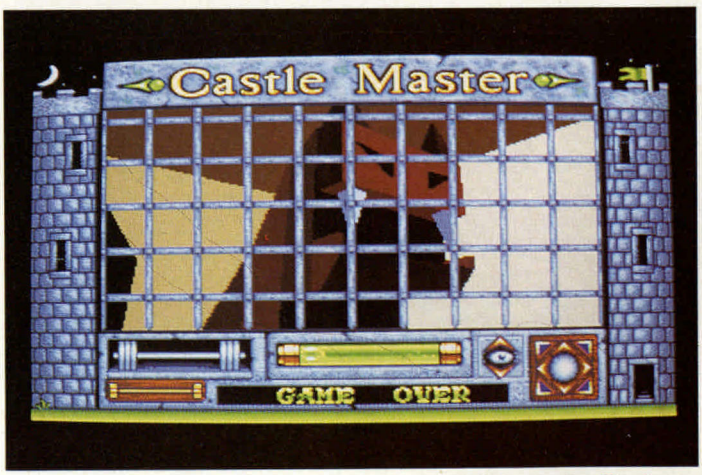


Castle Master`s problems can be solved using the various objects and pieces of furniture you stumble across.

Following last month`s snippet on the Domark/Incentive deal, here are the first shots of the first game to be released under the new agreement. Castle Master is set in the sixteenth century, when dames and chivalry were the order of the day, and as a brave knight, you have been summoned to rescue a fair maiden from each of the four towers in your kingdom. Evil spirits and demons have used their skills in witchcraft to secure the castles for their own evil doings, and each is guarded by all manner of strange spectres and ghouls. Once again, the Freescape system will come into its own with its smooth update and multiple views as you wander around the castles, scouring the walls and floors for clues, whilst listening for the barely audible cries that will lead you to the trapped damsel. However, whilst you are searching, the evil demons will rush to attack you, and must be bravely fought off before any progress can be made. The only way the evil spirits can be killed is with a well-aimed rock from your trusty catapault - but ammunition is scarce, so every shot must count. And with every spirit you send back to the hereafter, a `spirit level` (groan), tells of how powerful the evil beings are, and is reduced everytime you despatch one. It`ll be out in April, priced at £19.99



Could those small huts be kennels for the demons` hell-hounds?



The evil spirits have got the better of you, and the portcullis drops, ending your mission somewhat prematurely.

WIN A CD STACK SYSTEM FROM THOSE AWFULLY NICE EMPIRE PEOPLE



Pipe Mania!! Competition

Due for review next month, Pipemania is an addictive little number written by the Assembly Line and published by Empire. In the game, you play the part of a pipe maintenance man whose only goal in life is to ensure that he can lay enough pipes to get enough oil over the screen. This sounds extremely easy, but isn't as our hero is given the sections of pipe in a random order, and this means that a lot of strategic and forward thinking is needed. In all, there are over fifty levels to play through, each one being harder than the last.

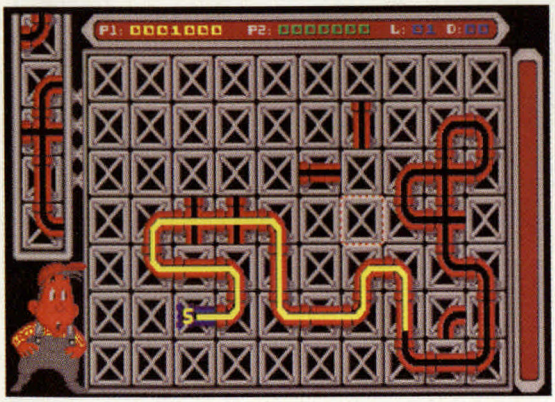
To celebrate the release of this brain-twisting game, Empire are offering a brilliant Sony CD system with lots of bells and whistles, along with twenty-five copies of the game to runners-up. The Sony Midisystem features loads of features, such as 20 watts output, a 10 band graphic equaliser, a double tape system, and the aforementioned CD player - just right to play your pipe music on (pipe music - geddit!).

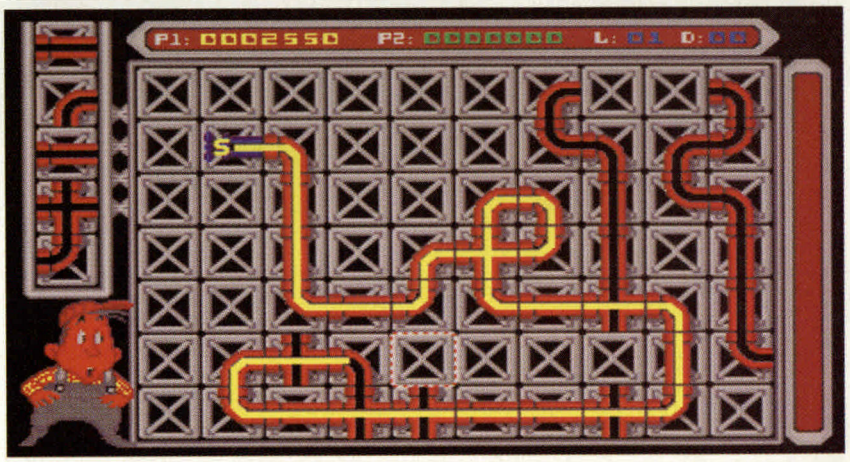


"Ummm, ahhh, now which way do I go?"



All you have to do to have a chance to win the said unit or a game, is take a look at this maze of pipes and find out which one actually makes it to the bottom of the screen. Like the game, this would be a simple affair, but it is made harder by the winding nature of the pipes. Entries must be in by the first of April, and the prizes will be sent direct from Empire.





Amiga Action Competition Rules

The Editor's decision is final and no correspondence will be entered into regarding competitions or the results of competitions. All prizes are offered believing them to be available. If, however, a prize is unavailable we reserve the right to substitute a prize of comparable value. No cash alternatives will be given. Results will be published as soon as possible and prizes despatched as quickly as possible. Please refrain from phoning regarding competition results or prize delivery. Employees of Interactive Publishing Ltd and companies participating in competitions are not eligible to enter.

The solution to the Pipemania competition is as above:

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Boggits Domain

Don't talk to me, I'm feeling pretty stupid. Okay, I suppose I might as well confess before someone else lets the story out, but I warn you - the first human to laugh gets his kneecaps scrambled! Last month I decided to leave the old treehouse and risk a journey back to civilisation to pay a visit to the 16 Bit User Show in the heart of London. Tramping to the edge of the Great Wood, I hitched a ride to the capital and arrived at the Horticultural Halls. A few well-aimed kicks at the ST anorak-brigade milling around in the foyer like demented sheep, soon cleared a path, and I was in.

Imagine my extreme displeasure when a quick tour of the hall revealed nothing but the usual, '5 Million Squeeky Floppies for a Fiver' stands. Feeling extremely 'dischuffed' I retired to the small bar and handed over large amounts of gold pieces - for small amounts of warm, amber liquid. Although I did subsequently uncover a few items of interest (see later), I left soon afterwards in an ugly mood to begin the long journey back home.

It was later that night, as I sat in bed cursing the world, that a sudden nasty thought popped into my head. Retrieving the show guide from the petunia patch in the garden where I had kicked it, I found that the exhibition had been spread over TWO halls. I had only gone into the small one!



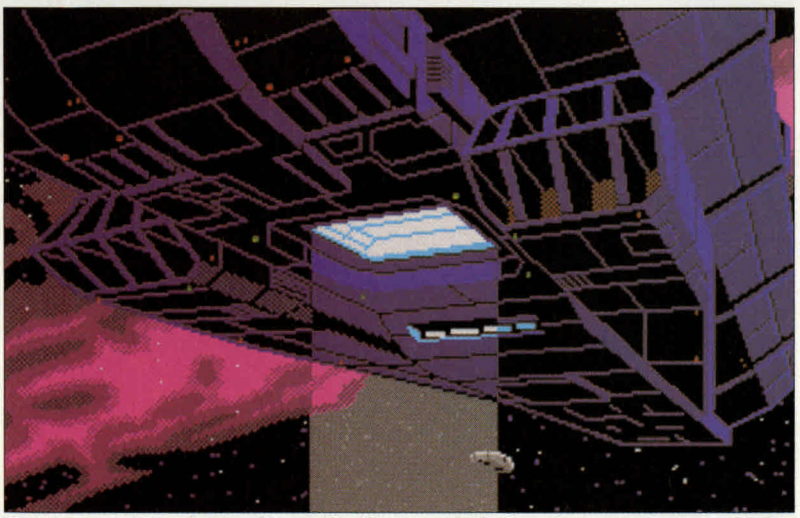
Looks like Ivy Cottage has more in the Dark Room than at first meets the eye. Search around, you never know what will develop.

It took a whole day to reglaze the windows in the tree house - and an hour finding all the crockery which I threw through them..

Well, what snippets did I uncover? Firstly, I chatted with the Horrorsoft team who were there to promote their ELVIRA - MISTRESS OF THE DARK game. The Tynesoft stand was shaking with the noise of the soundtrack, which has now been souped-up with the additional help of a ROLAND sound module. Mike Woodroffe explained that he had been so impressed by this electronic gizmo that they thought that they would try and steal a march on the likes of Sierra-on-Line by being the first to use it in an Amiga adventure game. I must admit that I thought Space Quest III had it built in, but it appears that Seirra only included that option in the Atari version. As Horrorsoft intend doing big business in the States they believe that this selling point will be a plus with our plutocratic cousins.

On the subject of colonials, Mike also mentioned that their other big seller, PERSONAL NIGHTMARE was doing great guns in Australia and the Continent. Not so well in Britain however - perhaps a little pricey for you poor Thatcher-trodden humans. On the subject of that game I made him promise to provide me with a solution for this mind-boggler as I've lost quite enough sleep trying to solve it.

I also heard about IMPERIUM from Electronic Arts. This is another Space Age strategy game due for release in late March. The game involves manipulation of economic, diplomatic and military



Park your brain in the pilot's seat of the Space Quest Ship. It's ergonomically styled to be comfortable and stylish - and that's not all it's got.

factors. The game is designed by Matthew Stibbe, the wargamer and programmed by Nick Wilson. The graphics are being created by Karl Cropley who was responsible for the sepia-coloured pictures used in The Hound of Shadow.

And it's also shadows that links nicely with my last piece of interesting news. Whilst lurking in the shadows of the Silica Shop stand, I heard one very interesting conversation between a customer and a double-breasted suit.

'Can I have a copy of Leisure Suit Larry II please?'

'No, it is not our company's policy to stock games like that.'

'Games like what?'

'Rude ones, of course.'

Well, well, who'd have thought it? Silica Shop is a porn-free zone. Now I'm not going to raise the old argument that it's a funny philosophy to believe that games involving mindless mayhem are good, while something slightly risque is bad, (oh yes I am!), but has anyone in Silica Shop actually played Larry II? If they have I'd just love them to show me the mucky bits, because I spent weeks trying to find some and never succeeded. You humans really get screwed up over the strangest things. I could see the point if it was a tasteless strip-poker game, but can you imagine what we'll think of this fearless stand against depravity in 50 years time? I have since contacted Larry's publishers (Activision) and they confirmed that this was the situation and they were equally bewildered. It transpires that Silica Shop also have a ban on 'Leather Goddess of Phobos' - Infocom's spoof adventure. Well I've got news for you, if you can find anything in that game to create a stir in your codpiece you are in serious trouble. I know there is nothing I can say that will change the situation because, let's face it, most of you humans are totally out of your tree, but there are times when I think my job of kicking some sense into you all is going to be more difficult than I first believed.

On the subject of Sierra-on-Line games (which I think are all great) I've been asked to remind you that hint books are available for all of them from your local software shops at £8.99. Personally, I think that's too much cash to pay, so I'll also mention two better solutions. The first is obvious, write to me WITH A S.A.E. (that's a stamped addressed envelope for any ST User) and you will get an instant (ho, ho,) reply. The second option is to ring 0734-310003 and get free advice from Sierra's help line. (2pm - 5pm).

More on Sierra, (I better get the huge bribe they promised!) KINGS QUEST IV has again been delayed until late March. Activision are protesting loudly to the company on your behalf about the delays in releasing Amiga versions. Let's hope they start getting some action.

Before we take a deep breath and wade through this month's bag of squeals, can I remind the more bewildered brethren amongst us that I only deal with adventure games. Now I know that YOU know this is an adventure help line, but each day the goblin arrives with piles of letters asking how to finish screen 3 of Xenon II. So wake up at the back. I haven't got a joystick - well at least not one I'm going to discuss here.

Turning the Handles on Jinxter's Safe

I'm at a loss in Jinxter when the time comes to open the damn safe in the Post Office, the bloody handles start flying up just when you think you are getting somewhere. What the 'Spectrum' are you supposed to do? Oh, and another thing, the Magnetic Scrolls game 'The Pawn'. Is there an Amiga version and where do I get it?

By the way, I was overwhelmingly pleased to see you guys make such a good job of a computer magazine. I would never have expected such class from a veteran mag, never mind a new one. Standing ovation, ENCORE!

John Smyth, Glasgow

Aha, a fan! Well, never let it be said that crawling calmed the savage Boggit, so here's yours...

Surely nobody can be Smyth with a 'Y' in Glasgow. Shouldn't you be 'Miles better off in Edinburgh'? I heard that Glasgow is so tough - any cat with a tail is a tourist! I also got totally 'Atari'ed off' with those handles, and had to use physical violence. However, because you paid proper respect, here's the answer. Turn bottom right twice, top right three, bottom right twice, top left, open safe. As for The Pawn, you should be able to order a copy from a supplier - I believe Rainbird/Microprose are the publishers, but admittedly things got very confusing after the break up of Telecomsoft. Still, any decent software shop should be able to sort you up. I'm sure I've heard of an impressive-sounding Glasgow Computer Centre in the past. If you want to be sure, phone Mag Scrolls for advice 01-403-4325



Do you think that Larry Laffer's adventures border on the dubious side of software. Personally, I think it is a lot of fuss about nothing.

Missing the Gold in Gold Rush

I am stuck in Sierra's Gold Rush. When I get on the stagecoach I am told that I have missed a small, but valuable thing which I will need in California. What is it? When I got to California and got into the hotel room, I put the photo in the capsule on the bird's leg. The Aeorogram on the bird told me that the bird would lead me to my brother, but when I open the window the bird flies away and I can't find it again.

W. Gannicliffe, Devon

What a clever Boggit I must be. I obviously have the power to tell you what you haven't got, without you even needing to tell me what you have got. What a plonker! Let's guess, it's just got to be the gold coin which is between the floorboards in the bandstand in the park. Well, am I right, or am I right?

As for following the bird, you've got it all wrong. It's your brother's mule you should be following. Have you talked to the blacksmith in the fort? I thought not. Your brother's mule has a brand on it. You must somehow get it out of the fort so you can let it go free and follow it. Although the thought of two mules stumbling around together in the wood is more than I can bear. NEXT!

Beyond Help in Beyond Zork

I have recently purchased an Amiga and have become engrossed in adventure games. I am stuck in the cellar and can't get out. Do you know where I can purchase a hint booklet other than writing to America?

Mrs R. Grocott, London

Well, well, a damsel in distress (he leered!). You are a glutton for punishment taking on Beyond Zork: it's not a game I would recommend for beginners. Have you found and squeezed the grey moss to gain dexterity? Once you have, you will be able to climb up a stack and get the bottle you need. If you have the amulet, and look at it through the bottle, you'll find another surprise. You could use this spell to give you the strength to smash your way out of the cellar. There is also the Sayonara spell which will get you out if you know it. As for hint books... Well surprise, surprise we are back to our good friends Activision. See above.



Just the thought of Elvira and her large pumpkins is enough to bring a smile to the face of Mike Woodroffe - Horrorsoft's Project Leader.

No Future in Future Wars

I'm playing the brilliant game, Future Wars, but after many nights staring at my monitor I still keep getting 'splatted' by the lowering ceiling because I don't know the code for the control box. Tell me the code - it's driving me mad.

P.S. Boggit's Domain is 'Wicked'!

W. Hilton, London

How come you know this game is 'brilliant'? You ain't seen anything of it yet. In the adjoining room there is a key under the carpet. You can use this key to open the cupboard in the map room to reveal a typewriter. And guess what you'll find if you examine the ribbon on this typewriter. Oh, you guessed. Perhaps you aint so silly after all. Then again... For the benefit of the other seven million bewildered humans who wrote (and didn't include a S.A.E) I will also reveal how to open the route from this room to the secret passage. You should have found a little red flag on the floor of the WC next door. This flag should be used on the little hole in the map. Look again, it's small.

Looking for Developments in Personal Nightmare

Having spent an arm and a leg buying Personal Nightmare I am desperate to finish it or I'll feel my money was wasted. My problem is trying to develop the film I found in the pocket of the traffic victim. I read in another magazine that I should be sending the film off for developing and I've got a stamp and the envelope, but I am supposed to send money to pay for the developing and I can't find any. Spare us three quid, Boggit, and I'll pay you back. Honest!

T. Black, Nuneaton

You've been reading other magazines - I ought to leave you suffer. You are quite right that you should send the film for

developing, but you don't send money. In the dark room of Ivy cottage you can find a photographic magazine under the table. The mag is like Amiga Action - it's got wonderful offers in it. Luckily for you, this month's offer is a free film developing voucher. Unlucky for you, my wonderful offer is a kick in the ankles if I catch you reading other mags.

Maniac Capers in the Mansion's Pool

I love UR mag, it's totally Rad! Anyway I'm stuck in Maniac Mansion, how do you open the garage door and how do you get the radio from the pool?
Radical, Kuwait

What's going on here? This is another 'Shriek of the Desert'. I've got a nasty suspicion that someone is shipping all my scrolls overseas to protect the great British public.

Well this game is another in a string of successful graphic adventures from Lucasfilms; Indiana Jones and Zac Makracken being the previous blockbusters. In this case you need someone to build up their strength before they can fix things for you. You need to find the exercise machine and get sweating. Two lots of exercise should make you strong enough to tear open the grating on the left-hand side of the entrance steps. Once in there you'll find some controls. With this new-found macho strength, a measly garage door will be no problem either.

Feeling Frightened in the Uninvited?

Before I go any further I would like your word that this will go no further as it's highly embarrassing to my reputation as a great Amiga Adventurer. My problem is that I cannot get past the dogs and into the Magisterium in Uninvited. I also can't get past the spider in the hole in the chapel.
A. Ullman

If you had been wise enough to enclose a SAE, all this publicity could have been avoided. Still, think of the 20p you saved. I wouldn't worry about anyone finding out about you, from what I can see there is only you, me and a dozen camels who are liable to be reading this issue. Well for a start, the dogs are not to be killed by feeding them poisoned sausage from the kitchen. I know this because I spent hours trying to do it. What you do need, is to cast the Thunder and Lightning spell. The noise will scare them so much, they will do a 'system dump' and run for it. As for the spider, that's another red-herring. There is no way past it, you must seek another route. Try taking the doll from the game room to the chapel and see what it's got to say. Have you examined the bust? I always examine busts whenever I can. (Ooops, sorry Silica!)



Bargain hunters studiously ignoring the Boggit in one of the 'TWO' halls which made up the recent 16 Bit User Show in London.

Dungeon Master Tips

This tip works on both the Atari ST and Amiga. To gain fighter and ninja levels in Dungeon Master, all you need is a joy-stick with auto-fire. For ninja, set up the menu so you are ready to punch, align the pointer on punch, take out the mouse and plug in the joystick. Flick on the auto-fire and, hey-presto! One more thing, always make sure you are on the screen showing your inventory and stats. Keep tabs on your health as your food and stamina decreases quickly. Don't expect to gain levels quickly, especially after Artisan, it takes time. The easiest is when you have just started, then you can make Journeyman Ninja in minutes, saving your fingers. Oh yes, I did use to have an Atari - but we needed a door-stop.
Aciiiiiid the Mad-Dood Soothsayer.

Look, smarty pants, the rules are that I make the Atari jokes - and you laugh. Dungeon Master is something of an idol to me and it's too good to miss anything in it. If you are too powerful, too early, you'll miss the fun of having to be very careful around monsters and that's where the gameplay lies. Still your idea again proves that if you let enough monkeys play with a game for long enough they'll come up with an idea that no sane Boggit ever would.

Send your hints, tips, words of wisdom, or complaints (extremely carefully worded), with a SAE to:-

BOGGIT'S DOMAIN
29, Blackthorn Drive
Larkfield
Kent ME20 6NR

P.S. Rumour has it that our illustrious Ed, Steve `Howza'about this for an idea` Merrett, is going to dig deep and offer a game for the best solutions, maps and cheats for the column. So, get writing, drawing or whatever, and send your entries to me at the above address.

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OVERLANDER

The year is now 2025, and within the short space of just thirty years our planet`s surface has been brought to ruin. No longer does any vegetation exist, and even the ground itself seems to have been burned and scarred. The reason for this disaster is the destruction of the ozone layer. Although the holes that appeared were quite small and insignificant they soon developed, and before long there was hardly any protection from the destructive sun`s rays that once kept the planet alive. Being unable to withstand the radiation, vast subterranean cities were made for the people who could afford to live there. The only link between these cities are the roads that once connected the old surface-cities, but these are now ruled by anarchic gangs, known as the Surface Dwellers. Only the Overlanders dare travel these roads between the various cities in their customised cars, and only for the right price.

At the beginning of each level you have a choice between two different missions, one paying you slightly more money than the other, as well as presenting a little bit more danger. Half of the money you will be paid for the mission will be paid up front, so that you can equip your car with a few parts which may just save your life. The surface dwellers will do their utmost to put a stop to your mission, and a good supply of weapons will be needed to hold them off. But as you reach the city, the gang leaders will take to the roads in their high-powered lorries, dropping mines on the road in front of you. Will you beat the odds and make it to the city for the other half of your money.

OVERALL RATING

60%



(Left & below) There is a wide selection of things to add to your car, but not everything can be afforded at the beginning of your career as an Overlander. But don`t spend your money just for the sake of it because, as you will find out, some things aren`t that useful, and can be done without.



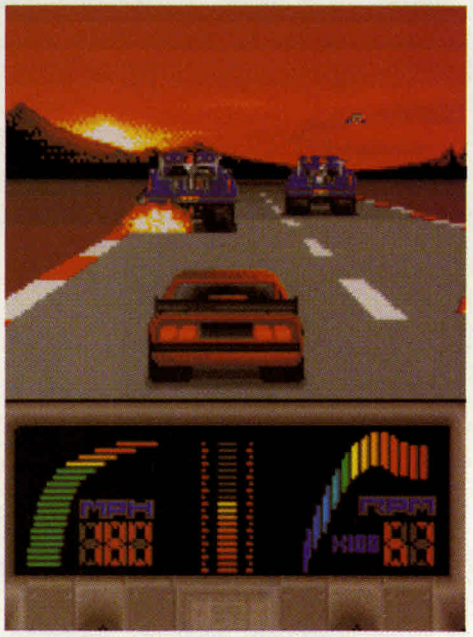
Each level offers two missions to choose from, but which one will prove more profitable? Although the second mission is slightly better, the money does seem to have that certain attraction.



Destroying most of the gang members doesn`t exactly put you in the leader`s good books, so he jumps into his lorry and comes after you.



Pulling up alongside you, one of the Surface Dwellers attempts to ram you into some of the passing scenery; a good bit of manoeuvering could come in handy here.



DOUG

Quite an enjoyable and playable little game, but even with the choice of two missions and all those scrummy extras for your car, the game just doesn`t have enough to it. As you beat the various missions, the game becomes gradually easier due to the amount of add-ons you acquire, and there`s a severe lack of different enemies. A good game, but so much more could have gone into it.

STEVE

Eighteen months after the ST version appeared, Overlander finally hits the Amiga. The basic problem with Overlander is, although there are improvements over the ST version, they are only aesthetic, and the ageing gameplay hasn`t been touched. Elite could have listened to the criticisms of the ST version, and made Overlander brilliant. Instead, it comes over as a disappointing conversion.

SOUND

A few explosions and bullet noises, but not much else. The only other sound to note is the music on the title screen.

48%

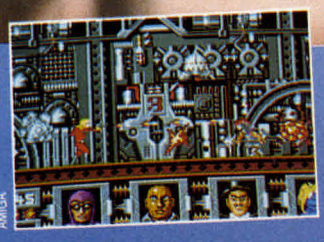
GRAPHICS

The graphics look really good, but it`s a shame there isn`t that much variety in the cars and bikes that assail you, and there isn`t that much feeling of speed as you bomb along the highway.

61%

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Feed The World...

I`m sure that you have all heard of Band Aid II, but do you remember Soft Aid a few years ago? It was a compilation of games put on tape, and the games were generously given by various software companies. Why don`t they bring out Soft Aid II to be available at a nominal price? With all the proceeds going to the Ethiopia Famine Appeal, I`m sure that this would be a success. What do you think? Also, what do you do with all the software sent to you for review? If you keep them, how about sending them to various charities? I`m sure the charities and the general public would applaud this idea.

I disagree with Daniel Watley`s letter in issue 4 that humour and an arcade section should be included in AA. I remember a certain magazine (which I won`t name) that I used to take and which included both and started to review films as well. Soon after, the standard of the magazine started to go down, so please don`t take the ideas up.

Darren Winter, Telford.

AA: A new Softaid compilation is a very good idea, and I for one would help in anyway with its release. As for the games that we review, we would give them away, but a lot of them are unprotected pre-production versions, and we couldn`t given them away without upsetting the software houses. In addition, we also need them from time to time for screenshotting and features. Finally, regarding the humour: don`t worry, you won`t see creeping in any film reviews, ice lolly mega-tests of anything that isn`t related to the Amiga - that I promise.

Food For Thought

As a newcomer to the world of the Commodore Amiga, I would like to make a couple of suggestions to improve your already excellent mag. First, would it be possible to include in each issue a mini-review of Amiga `classics` (a half-page review, perhaps) for us newcomers, so that we can make a judgement of whether to buy older games rather than base our decisions on the often biased opinions of friends and shop assistants. On the subject of older games, should the Space Quest, Leisure Suit Larry and Space Quest games be tackled in order, or can they be treated as separate adventures?

Secondly, is it really necessary to print tips and solutions to games so soon after their release or, as in the case of Zombi, before it! I know that if I had just paid a considerable sum of money for a game, I would want some enjoyment out of the game, rather than read about how to complete it. That`s why I hurriedly skip the GTGA section (sorry). Would it not be better to set up a system of GTGA solution/cheat sheets that readers could send for?

Finally, I suggest that you don`t state which games you will be reviewing next month, unless you are 100% sure that you will. For instance, in issue four, you stated that After the War, Starblaze, Bad Company, Drivin` Force, and Loriciel`s Pinball would be reviewed in issue five. None of them got a mention, let alone a review. Actually, whilst on the subject of issue five, why didn`t you mention that It Came From The Desert is a 1MEG-only game?

Tim Woodward, Leicester.

AA: Oops, you caught us napping there! First of all, at the moment, we haven`t got the space to write about the older games, but perhaps during the summer slump (when there are less games about) we could give it a whirl - but only if enough people want it. As for the GTGA faux-pas, when we were printing the Zombi guide, we were under the impression that game would already be in the shops. However, it was delayed, hence the guide appearing before the game`s release. We`ll try not to let it happen again. No, you don`t need to play the Sierra games in order. Finally, when we are given the news items, we are often promised the games for review the following month. However, programming hitches and tight deadlines often mean that we can`t get in everything we promise - although we do try! The It Came From The Desert review did have a 1MEG-only warning on it, but it fell off on the way to the printers - or so they say `up in art`!

ST or Amiga?

I am planning to buy an Amiga in March, and I buy your mag for reviews and advice on the Amiga itself. I am writing to you for reasons why I should not buy an ST - after all, they are cheaper, as is the software, and friends tell me that the two machines` capabilities are the same . Please help, I am in two minds!

M. Harper, Kent.

AA: Obviously, I am biased, but I used to write for our sister mag, ST Action, so have seen both machines in action. Of the two, in my opinion, the Amiga is the superior machine. Games like It Came from the Desert and Rocket Ranger show off the capabilities of the machine, whereas the ST version of Rocket Ranger was a total travesty. The Amiga has a double-sided drive that can store more than the ST`s, so disk swapping is cut down. In the end, it is up to you, but we feel the Amiga is where it`s at.

Defending Piracy

I have a complaint regarding the piracy article. I am in one of the crews whose material you printed, and I would like to get a few things straight:

1. We only crack, crunch and compile games if they do not justify their price tag. For example, Kick Off.

2. Myself and other crew members have a large collection of original and worthwhile titles, including Shadow of the Beast, Xenon II, Blood Money, etc.

3. We do not rip off companies as much as people think, most of the stuff is sent to people who wouldn`t buy the original stuff because it`s rubbish.

4. A message to the coder of Amiga Hard Drivin`, when we spoke to you at the PC show, you said that the blitter could not manipulate 3D filled vectors!!! I mean, honestly, that`s what the chip was designed for, total graphics supremacy! Also, why did you code it in C?

Sorry I had to be so harsh, but it had to be said. Please print this letter as most Amiga users haven`t got a clue what hacking and cracking is, so it automatically gives us an unjustified bad name.

P.S. You honestly can`t say that your reviewers don`t take home and pirate copies of the previews you are sent!

P.P.S. I don`t think the Ed will have the guts to print this letter.

A Crew Member, No Fixed Abode.

AA: OK, you`ve had your say. But, pardon me for asking, but what gives you the right to determine whether a game is worth the money or not, and then take it upon yourself to give it away to the people who you say wouldn`t have wanted it in the first place? I mean, if a game is as bad as you say, why would anyone want it? I don`t mean to sound snotty, but if you don`t like a game, don`t buy. Pirating a game just to get back at the software house because you feel it`s substandard isn`t going to help. If the bad

games don`t see, then the software companies will notice, and try harder next time. As for your P.S.s: yes I can; and yes, I did - up yours!

Compo Complaint

I have a complaint. In the January issue, I turned to the Ghouls`n`Ghosts compo, and noticed that on the other side of the page was the Dragon Spirit review. I wouldn`t mind cutting out the compo entry if there was only an advert on the other side, but please try to make sure that we don`t have to spoil our mags. Finally, don`t have an arcade section in the mag, I want to read about Amigas, not coin-ops.
Adrian Cole, Tyne and Wear.

AA: I`m sorry about printing the compo form on the back of the review, it was bad planning on our part. It won`t happen again (famous last words!). As regards the coin-op section, don`t worry, it won`t happen.

Workbench Problems

When I had an ST, a mate of mine came round to tell me that he had an Amiga. So I went round to have a look and was amazed by the quality of the graphics and sound. I duly went home, put my ST up for sale and bought an Amiga. OK, you may ask, what`s the problem? Well, my mate`s Amiga is a 1.2, whilst mine is a 1.3 Workbench. A lot of his games that work on the 1.2 Workbench won`t work on my 1.3 - Double Dragon II, for instance. I am now having to buy a 1.2 ROM so that the games will work properly. I phoned Virgin about Double Dragon II and they said that they have had hundreds of complaints and are blaming Commodore for changing the chip in the first place! What is going on? Am I going mad?

Also, can you answer whether the following games be converted: the Renegade trilogy, the wrestling coin-op WWF Superstars, the two Ikari Warriors sequels, WEC Le Mans, Rastan and Rastan II, and Mirrorsoft`s ancient Dynamite Dan games.

Finally, if Ocean can produce great conversion of Operation Thunderbolt and Op Wolf, why did U.S. Gold mess up the conversion of my favourite coin-op, Street Fighter?
Darren Payne, Oxford.

AA: I have heard of a few incompatability problems, but don`t replace your 1.3 ROM with a 1.2. Most of the games that are coming out will be written on machines with 1.3 systems, and you`ll effectively be taking a step down the ladder. As for the conversion list... I saw a conversion of the first Renegade game on the ST, but I don`t think Ocean have any plans to release them on the Amiga - come to think of it, the ST Renegade never hit the shops, either. WWF Superstars I have no news on at the moment, but Victory Road (the second Ikari Warriors game) is out via Ocean (it`s terrible - be warned!). WEC Le Mans was being converted but has been scrapped, and I doubt whether Mirrorsoft will bother converting Dynamite Dan and Co to our beloved machine. Finally, I doubt as to whether Rastan I will appear (a real pity as it is my favourite coin-op), but Rastan II may, soon. Last, but not least, U.S. Gold didn`t mess up the conversion of Street Fighter, the programmers did. Mind you, I wasn`t impressed with the coin-op, and there wasn`t a lot of gameplay there to convert.

Drivin` me Round The Bend!

When I was looking through your February issue, I saw a review for Hard Drivin`. I have already got this game, but I read the review anyway. In the review you said how good the graphics were and how well animated they were. I don`t know if you have a different version from me, but on mine there are quite a few bugs in the graphics department. For instance, at the end of the stage, if you press fire, the game crashes. Also, the car `disappears` in the action replay, and sometimes is put back on the wrong track after the action replay. Another fault on the action replay is that if you explode on the loop-the-loop, the explosion goes over the road when the car is under it. If your version of the game doesn`t have these bugs, please tell me, as the overall idea of the game is good, and it is a pity it is spoiled by some bugs.
J. Whykes, Dorset.

AA: I loaded up Hard Drivin` as I don`t remember seeing these bugs when we reviewed it, and, once again, I couldn`t find any. I did get the bug on the loop-the-loop to work, but this is more down to technical limitations than a bug, I think. If you still have problems, take it back to where you bought it and ask for a replacement.

The Amiga Action Q&A Service Returns!

Could you please answer the following questions?

1. Will you be including a readers` chart in your future issues?
2. Do you know if anyone will be converting Chase HQ II to the Amiga?
3. Finally, what percentage would you have given Forgotten Worlds?

Justin Edwards, Bristol.

AA: Answering your questions:

1. Hmmm, we`re still not decided. We`ve been sent lots of charts , but we`ll see how it goes. If enough people want it, we`ll probably do it.
2. Not yet. But I expect it`ll be Ocean.
3. I`m not a great fan of Forgotten Worlds, I`m afraid. It`s a good conversion, but it`s not that playable. However, after a quick yell across the office, we`d probably give it around the 70% mark.

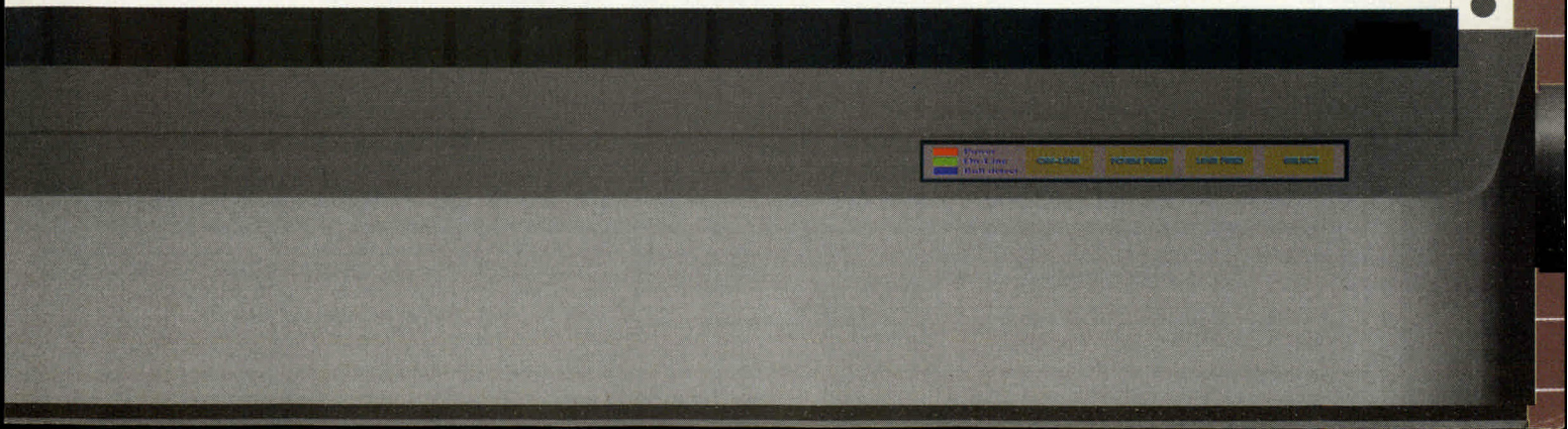
Modem Madness.

I have recently had access to a modem and may I just say that it was bloody brilliant! The doors that are open to you are infinite. You can hack someone`s head off who lives miles away in a multi-user game; you can down-load games and demos and even rude piccies! The only problem is that you end up with British Telecom threatening to cut you off because your phone bill comes to about six million quid! But who cares! We`re young, so let`s enjoy life! If you get a chance to use a modem - GO FOR IT!!
Martin `J.R. Hartley` Luck, Bromley.

AA: Remember, folks, Mr Hartley is a qualified nutter, and normal people shouldn`t attempt to run up huge phone bills without the help of an adult. Seriously, modems are a good laugh, and we will be looking into them very soon. Finally, J.R, your book on fishing is here if you`d like to collect it - oh, by the way, if your phone bill is that much, don`t count on growing old, will you!

Right, that`s it for this month. If you`ve got any whinges, moans of whatever, just drop us a line to:

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F-29 RETALIATOR

The Americans were all hush-hush when the Stealth bomber was first being designed, but flight simulators galore have been released showing their version of the six-billion-dollar plane. Retaliator allows the pilot to fly a multi-million dollar aircraft - well, two of them, actually. The Lockheed F-22 and the Grumman F-29 are the aeroplanes currently in the hangar bay, both of which are multi-role supersonic fighters with combat capabilities far better than any present aircraft. The two aeroplanes were originally designed to host a number of features: Stealth capabilities, which would make them invisible to radar; S.T.O.L., enabling them to take off and land in confined areas and lastly, the ability to supercruise, that is, to fly at supersonic speeds without the aid of an afterburner.

The finished product enabled the fighters to fly to a height of seventy-thousand feet - forty percent higher than any other fighter-aircraft. This also meant there was less risk from S.A.M. sites that were usually situated around an enemy base. The added speed also meant that they could out-run the enemy and therefore reduce the exposure time. The F-29 has one major difference from the average fighter: its wings are swept forward allowing greater manoeuverability in a smaller space.

A flight simulator would not be complete without the inclusion of a scenario, and Retaliator offers not one but four to choose from. The easiest of them all is based in Arizona, where a thousand square miles has been used for a test range that includes various targets and produces a real simulation of a hostile land. The Middle East has had several ATF's shipped over and since war has broken out, their use is increasing. You are heavily out numbered, and must take out at least three enemy aircraft for every one of yours. The middle of the Pacific is the setting for the third scenario, and the nation`s oil fields at the bottom of the sea are under threat. Defeat the advancing aircraft and oncoming sea vessels to become the victor. Last, but by no means least, our home continent of Europe holds host to the final frontier. NATO is on full alert, and you are there to aid them in their struggle to prevent the outbreak of another world war.

Each scenario has a number of objectives within it, all of which are explained in great detail in the comprehensive manual. Once the setting has been selected, the arming of the plane must commence. A large selection of bombs and missiles are at your disposal, but care must be taken so you don't exceed the pay-load of your advanced tactical fighter. The sky is where the action is, so without further ado, slip into your flight overalls and don your helmet.

Control of the yoke is via the joystick or mouse, and the

STEVE

Like Bomber, F-29 has seen quite a bit of pre-release hype, and would have to be very good to live up to it. However, with its beautifully smooth, not to mention detailed, filled-3D graphics and numerous options and missions, it makes the grade with ease. Everything about Retaliator is polished, and it is obvious that Ocean have made every effort to make their first flight sim a memorable one.

DOUG

Flight sims are often judged soley on the basis of the quality of their graphics and the speed of their update, and if we were to do so with Retaliator, it would be the first game ever to score 100%! They really are superb, but are only the icing on a highly-polished cake. Retaliator is quite simply brilliant, and has everything a flight sim buff could ever want.

SOUND

The usual rocket explosions, machine gun fire - nothing spectacular.

60%

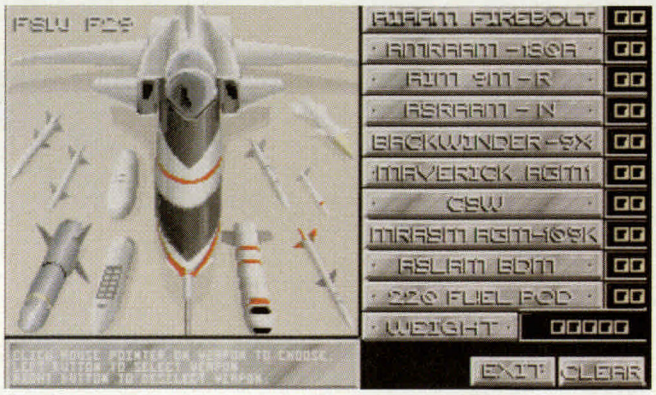


All hot-shots have to begin somewhere! You become a Colonel when you sign on, though, so you`re one of the big guys to begin with.

Not one but two, planes to choose from. The Lockheed F-22 is one heck of a stealthy aircraft, but wouldn't you rather have the high manoeuvrability of the Grumman F-29 at your fingertips?



A fighter plane is not complete if it isn't armed, and with a selection of the latest military missiles and bombs, you shouldn't have any trouble equipping this baby!





Each mission has its own map, and it is from this that you can select the air base you begin at. Some are in enemy territory, so it is best to read the brief on each airstrip before you select it.

keyboard operates the other, numerous features. Piloting the bird is easy to get to grips with, so you should be executing Immelmann turns after a few training flights!

ALEX

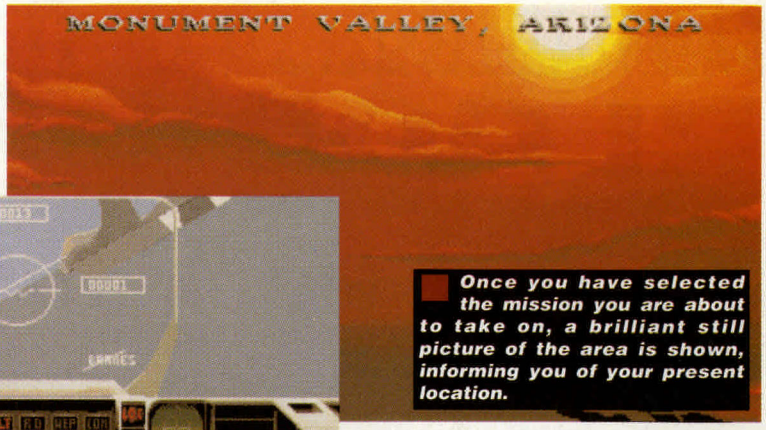
Decent flight simulators seem to be the flavour of the month, what with Activision's Fighter Bomber and now F-29 Retaliator. Retaliator has the fastest update that I have seen on the Amiga, and some of the most detailed vector graphics as well! I found the controls were not to my liking, though: they were far too oversensitive. One nudge and the nose of the plane is pointing straight up or straight down. That aside, Ocean have done a brilliant job on their first flight simulator - a first-class piece of software.

GRAPHICS

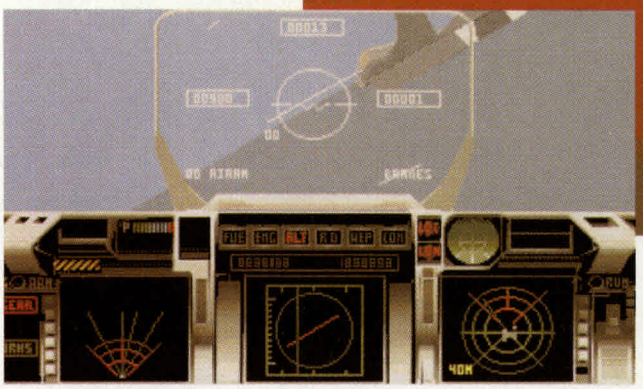
Some of the fastest and smoothest vector graphics seen on the Amiga to date.

84%

(below) When you begin each mission, the rest of your squadron is visible by looking out of your cockpit window. If you lose sight of them, you always have radar to fall back on!



Once you have selected the mission you are about to take on, a brilliant still picture of the area is shown, informing you of your present location.



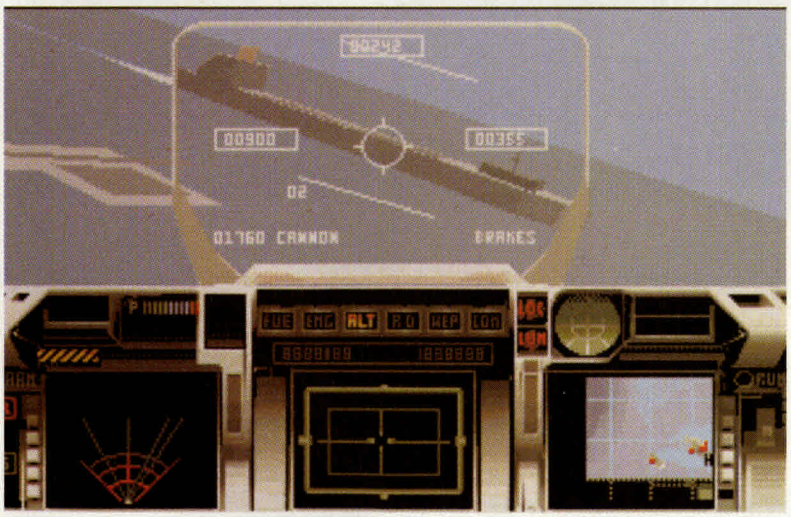
When you reach major enemy ground targets, it is unlikely that there will be no S.A.M. sites around. Life without these would be simple, but for the moment, you are going to have on keep on releasing your chaff!



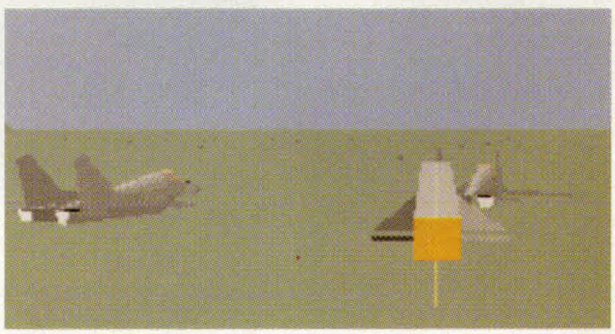
AMIGA ACTION

OVERALL RATING

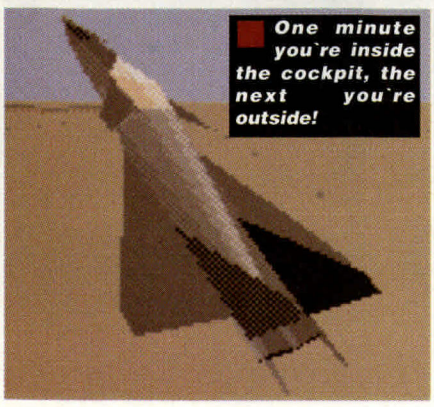
84%



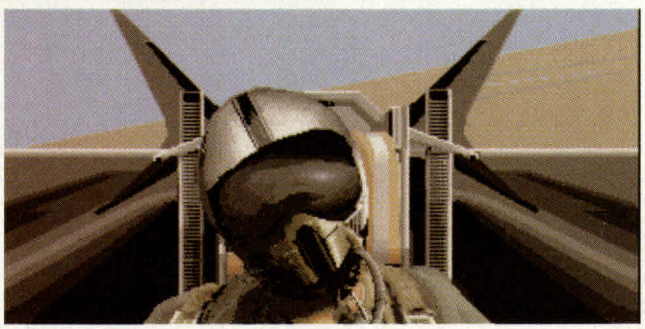
Great care has been taken in the detail of each target, in both the air and on the ground. A large tanker docks at a small island, probably about to take some of the oil that you have been told to secure.



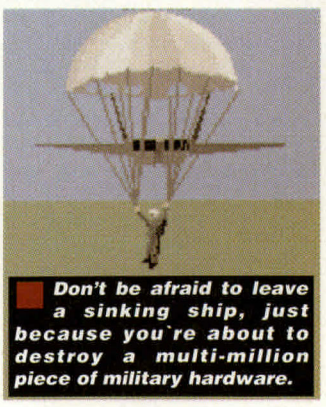
Bogey at twelve o'clock! A head-to-head may look spectacular, but you have to pull around and destroy him before he gets you!



One minute you're inside the cockpit, the next you're outside!



I wonder why your head is always at a slant when flying? Maybe you have been pulling too many high-G manoeuvres again!



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BLOODWYCH DATA DISK

It would seem that a hero's work is never done. No matter how much you strive and fight, those bad guys keep on coming back for more.

It appears that the Lord of Entropy was not in fact killed, he was merely "ejected" (Oooer!). Now he wants revenge and he has constructed a new dungeon which makes the old Treihadwyl seem like a holiday camp. Looks like it's 'Once more into the breech, dear friends', the Crystal Guardians are primed and waiting.

Loading your Save game file with the new data disk will place you in even deeper trouble than you ever thought possible. Luckily, the tooth fairy has also made it into the 'brick out-house' with you and she has brought with her a new range of spells to help you wreak havoc. There are new artefacts to be found and controlled as well as our our favourite - N'Egg.

More monsters can be recruited to fight alongside you in your quest, so don't go automatically hitting things just because they're ugly. (And that goes for the reviewer - Ed.)

One bonus item which has been included with the game is a hint booklet for the original Bloodwych game. This may well be a godsend to bewildered Boggits, but I would assume you would have finished the original game before you bought this.

ANDY

Not much one can say that's new. If you liked the original, you'll want this extension. Although it has its obvious limitations it is streets ahead of other RPGs. The small graphics and naff sound need to be revamped. I know the writers have got the basic design correct, it's just the presentation that's letting it down. I fervently hope that they will create another game that will use the potential that both they and the Amiga surely have.

SK

This extension to the original was a little too similar for my liking. It would have been nice if the programmers had improved the graphics and the overall presentation, but I reckon this will be more than enough for ardent Bloodwych fans. The new features aren't instantly noticeable, but persevere with the game, and you'll realise that this isn't as close a copy as it looks - plus the new levels will prbably last longer than the last lot. Hopefully, though, if there is another data disk, it will add more to the game than just new levels.

GRAPHICS

Little seems changed from the original, although again the blurb claims improvements. Things are still a little small and a tad bright and cheerful.

72%

SOUND

Although it's claimed that this has been enhanced, I have seen little evidence. It's still pretty restricted when one considers the improvements that could have be made.

68%

OVERALL RATING

77%



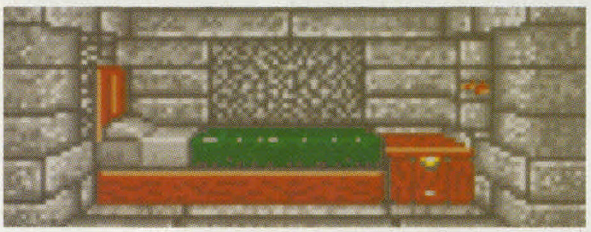
Same old faces, but different problems to battle through for weary Bloodwych fans.

The Dungeon inhabitants may all look like trouble, but some have hearts of gold. Chat before you splat. One man's monster is another's friend.





(Above) The Spell Fairy is back, but heavier monsters need heavier spells, so she's come bearing gifts to make light of your troubles.



Perhaps the squeaky-clean appearance of these YMCA bedrooms could have been made a bit more grubby, to bring some badly needed atmosphere into this game.

Doors still 'click' smartly (and unrealistically) open, quite differently from the grinding and clacking that accompanies doors in Dungeon Master.



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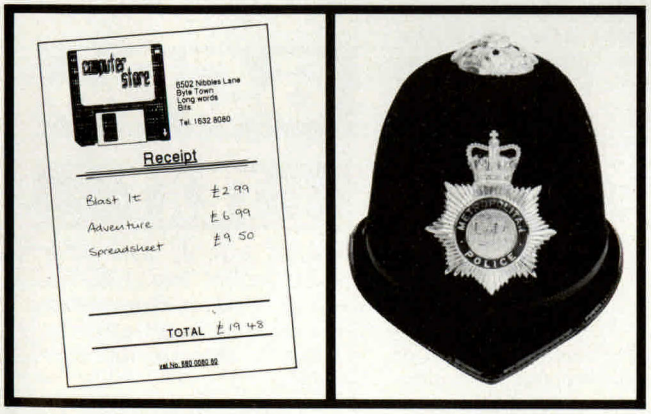
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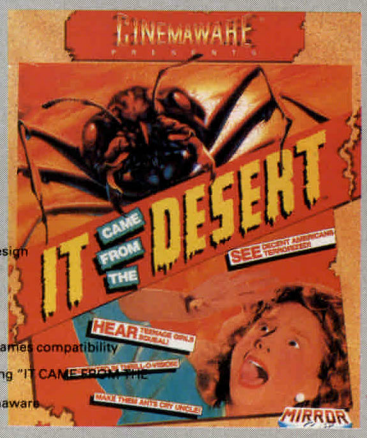
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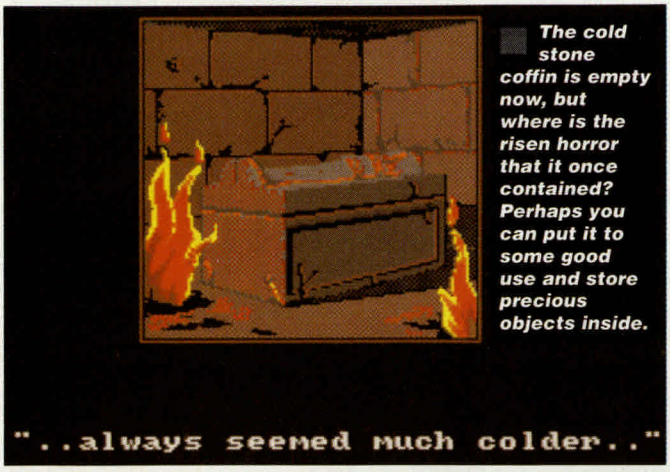
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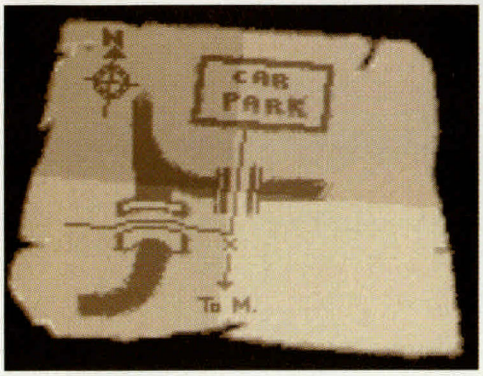
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The cold stone coffin is empty now, but where is the risen horror that it once contained? Perhaps you can put it to some good use and store precious objects inside.



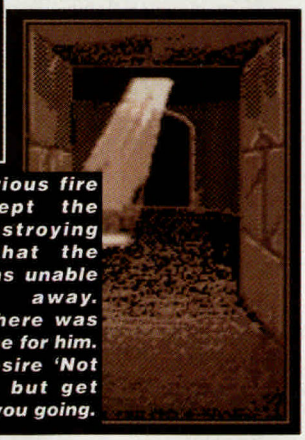
This golden plaque was cunningly fashioned to contain a secret which only the dead Professor was able to uncover. Now it's your turn to wrest the secret from his notebook.



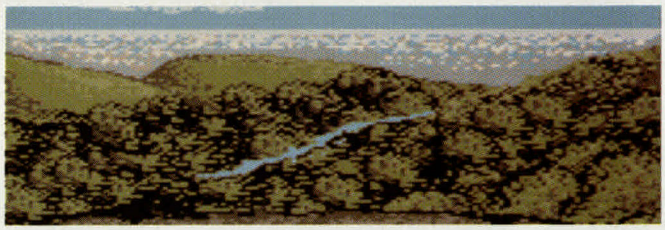
The map leads from the moor car-park to the grassy mound in the forest where the tomb lies open. But has your father left enough clues to help you uncover the secret of the old burial mound?

(Below) Searches of the muddy river bank reveal an old boat. What a pity it has no pole to enable you to push off across the lake.





A mysterious fire has swept the tomb destroying everthing that the professor was unable to hide away. Unhappily, there was no hiding place for him. Only your desire 'Not to get mad, but get even!' keeps you going.



From the top of a rocky climb the surrounding countryside looks peaceful enough, but you know time is short for the world and mankind.

MELBOURNE HOUSE £19.99

DEMON'S TOMB

There is a forest glade nestling beneath the shadow of Exmoor, where time holds its breath. Soon the long centuries of its waiting will come to an end, and the horror will be free to rise and wreak terrible revenge.

In this text adventure you will firstly control the actions of the archeologist who discovers the resting place of an old priest. Despite your help, he is doomed, but you have a chance to ensure he saves as many clues as possible before he dies. You'll get a second chance at proving your worth by subsequently controlling the actions of his son. With the help of your dad's notebook and your own dog, you must outwit the evil in the tomb. This part of old England is a mysterious place. There is a mist-covered island out there in the nearby lake which is just begging you to pay it a visit (what a pity the only boat seems to be deficient in the oars department). Some old letters of your father's make mention of a collector of antiquities who lives nearby. Maybe he knows something which would help you uncover more of the puzzle.

To take the misery out of finding the correct words, you have the option to display a window of words from which you can make up your commands. There is a partial solution to the game included in the manual and the game also allows you to 'Think' about an object which sometimes brings inspiration.

While the game follows the traditional `find object - use object` it still seems to bring some original excitement and charm to an old scenario.

Time is short, the hour of the prophecy is at hand. There are woods to search, tombs to excavate, lakes to cross and old houses to burgle. Let's move it!

OVERALL RATING 70%

SK

Oh no, not another of those boring old text-style adventures! That was my first thought, but upon investigation it turned out to be misplaced. True it was a text adventure but it was far from boring. To be fair, it does have some graphics, stills of the locations. The bit I liked most about it (and I can't remember playing a game with a similar facility) was the menu option. This gives a list of various commands that you can carry out. My only gripe with it was that it should still have allowed keyboard entry.

ANDY

Unlike some text adventures I did feel that I was getting somewhere and consequently I wanted to play on. The menu of words is handy as it can give you clues as to the likely solution. I especially liked the game's humour. Other sources of text adventures are drying up, but the difficulty level of this game seems better aimed at the average player. Yessir, this looks like a game which could do some nice business.

GRAPHICS

Not quite the Magnetic Scrolls standard, but nice enough and lots of them. Not being too large, they also don't take long to load and therefore don't slow up the action.

65%

TEXT

Quite witty, and the method of input is an easy one - the word menu was particularly helpful.. Overall, not bad at all.

70%

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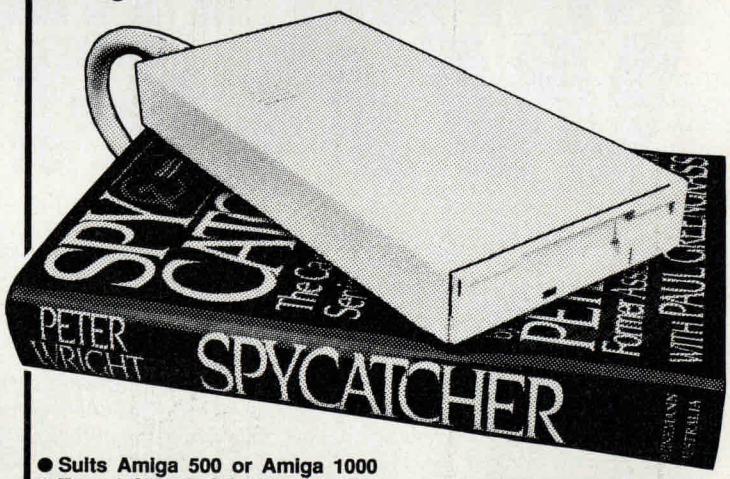
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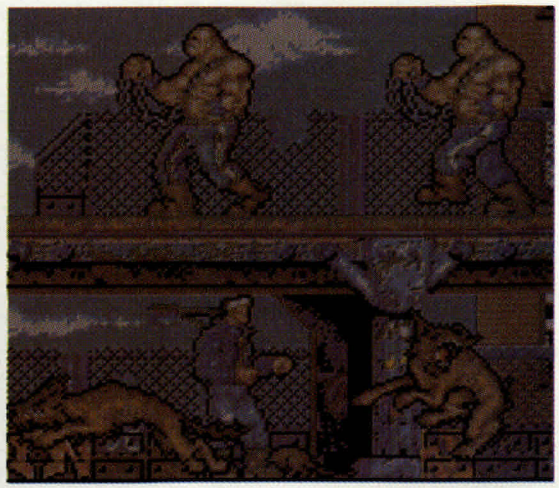
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Rogers` mission begins in a slum area of Manhattan. He begins armed only with his powerful fists and feet, but by felling certain assailants, weapons, such as guns and chains, can be collected and used against the enemy.





As expected, the only creatures to survive the war are dogs and rats. It is not uncommon for these creatures to attack the surviving humans, but they can be seen off with a well-timed kick as they pounce on you.

DINAMIC £19.95

AFTER THE WAR

During the twentieth century, most people had discounted the possibility of a nuclear war. There had been big campaigns at the time: banners, protests, even an anti-nuclear movement. However, by the start of the year 2011, the international political front was beginning to break up. Scaremongering between countries led to minor wars and battles, but it wasn`t until 2018 that somebody was actually foolish enough to press THE button. Who was actually responsible for the global `eye for an eye` attacks that followed was never determined - in fact, it wasn`t particularly important now - as the once-great cities were now only homes for groups of a dozen or so inhabitants - all of whose biggest priority was to stay alive. As the radioactive fall-out and massive doses of radiation took their toll, the last vestiges of civilisation gave way to anarchy, and the few handfuls of surviving dignitaries and politicians became as ruthless and self-centred as the people left to die in the rubble remains of the once-bustling cities.

Of all the cities, Manhattan probably came off the worst. It had always had its problems with gang violence, muggings and the like, but now these unruly elements had seized control of the streets and - for what it was worth - were the equivalent of what was once called a council. However, Manhattan had one advantage over other thug-ruled cities, such as Tokyo, London and Berlin - it had an escape route. According to the murmerings of meths-drinking down-and-outs, a certain Professor McJerin had secured a military base somewhere beneath the city`s deadly streets, and the rumour also mentioned that McJerin, a denounced professor, notorious for his sub-human experiments and schizophrenic moods, knew of an entry point to the speculated and safe `outer colonies`.

It wasn`t a lot to go on, but Jonathan `Jungle` Rogers knew it was the biggest hope he had in this doomed city. Following numerous leads, he realised that to find McJerin`s lair he would first have to lauch a three-stage attack through the city, avoiding the numerous flesh-eating crazies and hoodlums that patrolled the area, and trying not to stay in the poisoned air for too long. Then, once in the metal-walled base, he would have to be prepared for whatever protection devices the mad professor had lined up. Luckily, several year`s worth of military training had set Rogers in good stead for the oncoming trek through the city, but he knew that the cannibalistic survivors would attack in groups of three or four rather than alone. In addition, the radiation was known to have had a strange effect on the few remaining creatures, and now stories were bandied about regarding rabid dogs and even rats. Only one thing was for sure: it sure wasn`t going to be easy...

STEVE

Instantly appealing thanks to some of the best graphics, animation and sound ever to reach the Amiga, After The War is only let down by the repetitive nature of its gameplay. Strutting past the colourful backdrops, wasting thugs and mutants starts off to be a fun pastime - particularly in the second stage when you are given a gun and unlimited ammo - but the constant batterings whittle your energy away, giving the game a very `hit and miss` feel to it, implying that skill isn`t really needed. Likewise, as the blasting and kicking action makes up the entire game, the initial appeal will wear off rather rapidly.

DOUG

After The War is a game worth anyone`s money. The graphics are some of the best I`ve seen for a long time, and the sound effects are excellent. The first stage has you beating your enemies to a pulp, and then the second sees you on the rampage with a machine gun. If you want a good, playable arcade game, then this is more than enough.

SOUND

Meaty sound effects in both sections, make the game an aural delight. There are grunts, groans and thwack noises that even Batman would have been proud of, but I particularly liked the noise the rabid dogs made when you booted them!

68%

ALEX

Before you assume that After the War is another dull beat `em-up, think again, because some of the best graphics and animation all combine to make After the War one of the best, if not the best, beat `em-ups at the moment. Its strong point, apart from the graphics and sound, is the sheer playability which keeps you addicted. Stage two is my favourite of the two levels, and you could do far worse than buy After the War if you just want a simple kill `em game.

GRAPHICS

The large sprites are very well animated with a lot of nice attention to detail. Each of the varied assailants has a character of its own and - surprisingly - the action doesn`t slow down.

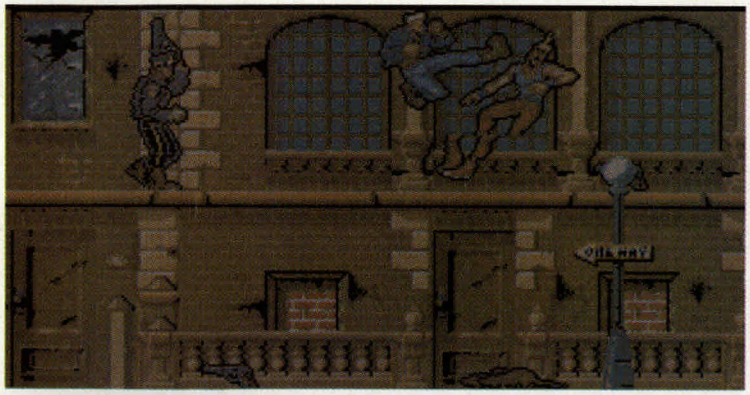
83%

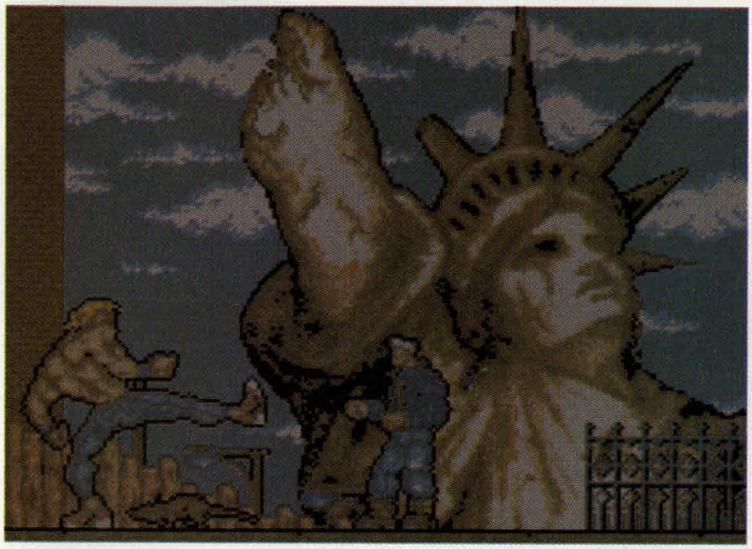
AMIGA ACTION

OVERALL RATING

80%

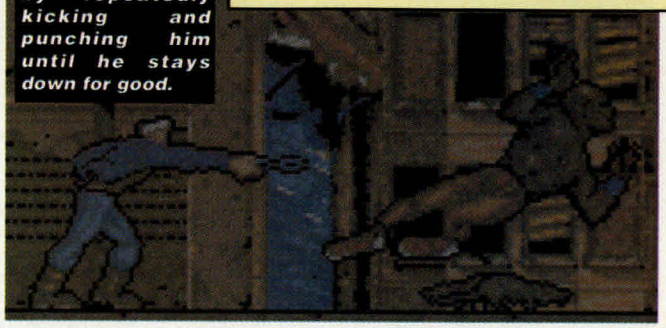
As in Dragon Ninja, the action takes place over two levels. But don't count on avoiding the enemy's clutches by simply clambering on to the higher platform, they will be after you like a shot.



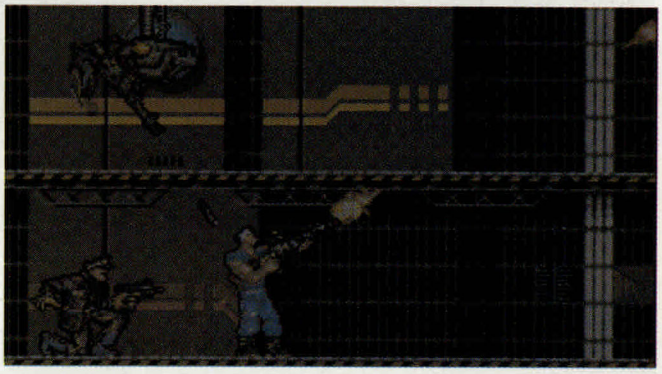


Each of the two stages is set against a time-limit of some sort. In the first section it is cunningly disguised as a radiation counter which is growing all the time, whilst it is replaced by a bomb timer in the second stage.

The first city stage is split into three levels, each of which is ruled over by a massive street fighter. An energy bar depicts the strength of your opponent, but can be whittled away by repeatedly kicking and punching him until he stays down for good.

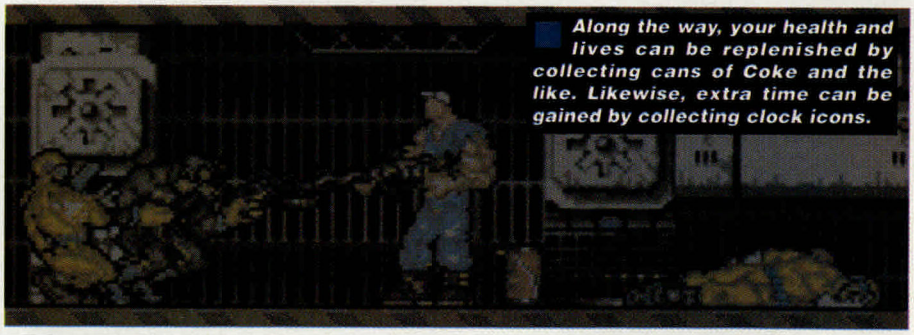


(Below) Once the access code to the second level has been gained, Rogers' adventures take him into McJarin's bunker. Here, the thugs and bent policemen are replaced by ceiling-mounted guns and armed guards, but luckily you have found a machine gun and an unlimited supply of ammo for protection.





Along the way, your health and lives can be replenished by collecting cans of Coke and the like. Likewise, extra time can be gained by collecting clock icons.





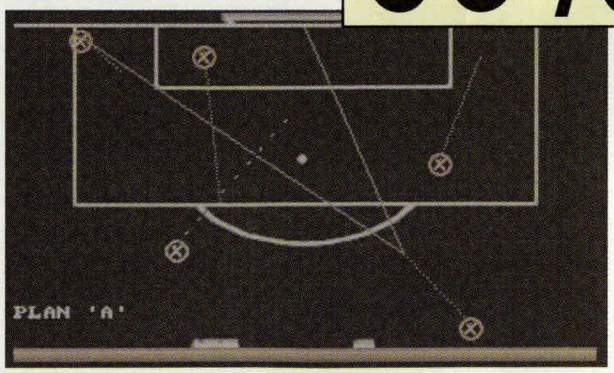
(Above & right) Replacing the large street fighter guardians of the first stage is a large robot looking just a teeny bit similar to Robocop's main adversary, ED209. Toting a powerful gun, ED... sorry, this walker robot, must first have a protective plate and then its gun blown away before it gives up the ghost.

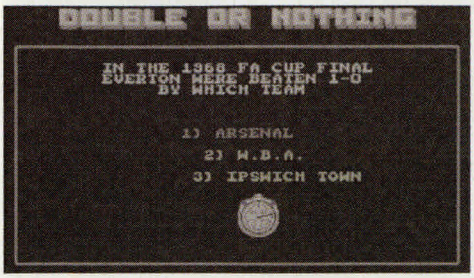


The final obstacle between you and the safe 'outer colonies' is this formidable tank. As with the walker robot you met earlier, key sections of the tank's weaponry must be shot off, until it explodes in a flurry of flames indicating the end of the game.

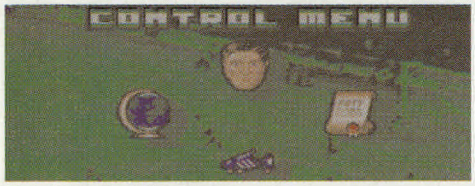


(Below & left) Goal cards are essential for making an impression as a hot striker. Their price varies, but they are generally around the five-hundred quid mark and allow you a valuable shot at your opponent`s goal. Once a card has been selected, you must memorise the formation pattern, and follow it through.

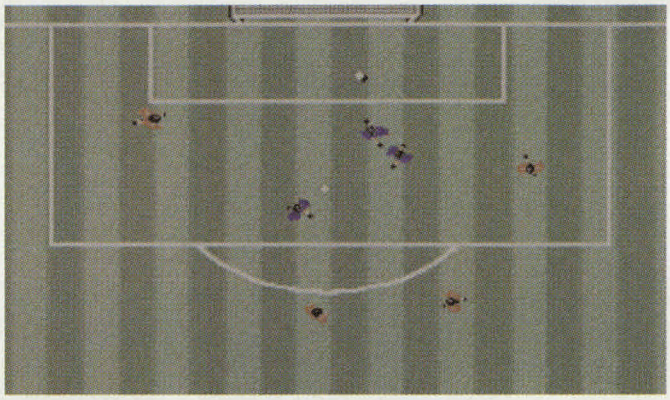




(Left) The `Double or Quits` section is useful for building up a nice nest egg. You can bet anything up to five-hundred pounds, and the prize doubles with every question you answer.



From this main menu screen, any collected medals or honours can be viewed, and it allows you to enter either the `Double or Quits` screen, put yourself up for transfer, or simply play a match.



Providing you can answer a few questions or prove your goal-scoring abilities, there is every chance you will be spotted by an England scout. Once in the team, you must then ensure you score in every international match you play to stay in the squad.

OVERALL RATING

63%

GREMLIN £19.99

FOOTBALLER OF THE YEAR 2

Gremlin`s original Footballer Of The Year game never appeared on the Amiga, but now they are offering you the chance to make a pitch for stardom in this revamped sequel. As a newcomer to the world of football and all the publicity that surrounds it, you must prove to the FA that you have got what it takes to take the coveted title. However, good striking skills aren`t the only thing you need to attain the award; you will need to prove that you can work well with the rest of the team, and that your knowledge of the game will stand you in good stead when it comes to appearing on TV and at functions.

The game is basically a simple quiz game, with a few playable goalmouth incidents thrown in. Likewise, unexpected incidents and blunders offer a certain realism to the game that mirrors the ups and downs a professional side will encounter. Having entered your name, the nationality of the team you wish to represent if offered a chance in the World Cup team, and your league side, you begin the game with a paltry five-hundred quid in your pocket. However, for every game you play, you will be paid a set amount, and extra cash can be made by participating in TV shows. Despite any new-found wealth, though, you can invest your money by buying yourself goal or transfer cards.

Goal cards allow you a crack at your opponent`s goal, providing you work as a team; and the more expensive transfer cards will allow you to set up a deal with a new club. However, before they take you on, they will want to test your knowledge or goal-scoring abilities, so you will be asked either to answer some questions or score a set number of goals.

ALEX

I must say that Football of the Year 2 is one of the better football player games, because even people who aren't that interested in soccer can gain enjoyment out of it. Although knowledge of the sport is helpful, it is not essential, and that is what I liked about it. I thought the inclusion of the arcade sequences improved the game no end, and thus added to the game's overall appeal.

GRAPHICS

Nothing particularly special, but fancy graphics aren`t really needed in this sort of game. The score-board sequences are quite nice, though.

53%

SOUND

Not a lot, really. A few ditties, burbles and the like. But nothing breathtaking.

50%

STEVE

Like football, Footballer Of The Year 2 is a funny old game. It`s question and answer format, complete with negligible football sequences is a strange, untaxing mish-mash, yet I found myself quite addicted. The gambling element of the `Double or Quits` screen tests your football knowledge (although the questions do tend to repeat) and the footy sections are neat but, overall, there just wasn`t enough there to sustain my interest.

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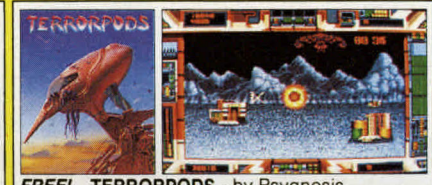
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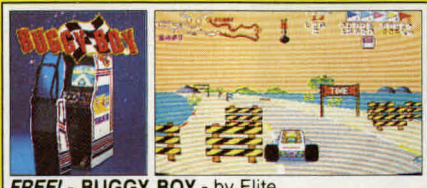
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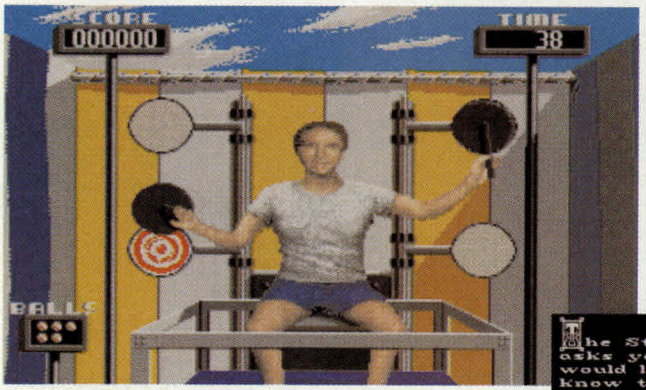
Taking careful aim, you wait anxiously for the balls to be thrown up into the air. Tokens will be awarded for each green ball you shoot, and taken away if you accidentally shoot a red one.

The clown might be smiling, but that soon changes when you start throwing the knives.

OVERALL RATING

62%

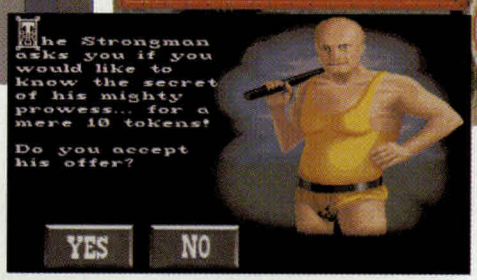




Poor old Willy must be dunked three times if you are to succeed on this show, but you've only got five balls to accomplish this. You'll have to be quick to soak Willy.



The boys of today certainly have an appetite, and even though the fair might be a lot of fun, if you don't make regular trips to the food stand, you'll end up going home.



(Right) One of the fair people comes up to you, and offers you an object that will gaurantee your success at the various sideshows, but is he telling the truth?

ACTIONWARE £24.99

SIDESHOW

What with all this wind and rain, wouldn't it be nice to spend a day at the fair? Well, now you can, thanks to Sideshow. Like all of Actionware's previous games, Sideshow is played with a light gun (or a mouse if you aren't fortunate enough to own a gun), and using your sharp-shooter instincts you must shoot various targets that appear on the screen. There are two levels of gameplay in all: the children's level (for the so-called weak at heart) where you are allowed to play some of the sideshows; and the adult level (for the more macho among us).

At the beginning of the game you start with a small amount of tokens, and these are exchanged by the various stall owners for goes on their stalls. The object of each sideshow is to win more tokens than you paid the stall owner, but this can only be done three times, and then the stall owner decides to call it a day, before he loses any more precious tokens. Sometimes, during the course of the game, certain fairground people will come up and offer you special objects that may or may not help you in winning at the sideshows, in exchange for some of those valuable tokens. It's a risk, but it can be worth it.

Goes on the sideshows aren't the only thing to spend your tokens on. While you wander around the fair you will build up quite a hefty appetite, and so every now and then a trip to the food stall will have to be made. There is a selection of goodies to choose from, and depending on how much they cost, you will be able to reduce your hunger. You must make sure that you never get to hungry, or you will just run off home to dinner and miss the rest of the fair. How sad!

DOUG

Sideshow is a fun and addictive game when you have the light gun, but without it it soon becomes repetitively boring. Not having all of the sound effects may to annoy some people, but don't worry, there isn't that much extra. If you already own the light gun, then Sideshow is worth having, but I wouldn't buy the gun just for this game.

ALEX

Sideshow is nicely presented but I'm afraid that is where the good points end. The gameplay is best described as shallow: all you have to do is position the cross hairs and fire! The inclusion of the hunger element of the game is a nice idea, and makes a simple game that little bit harder. Overall, Sideshow is like the stale popcorn that comes in the package: appetising at first but doesn't agree with you later on.

GRAPHICS

Loads of sideshows, each one looking totally different to the last, and to make things even better, they've all been drawn really well.

68%

SOUND

The music's a bit irritaing, but there are plenty of sound effects to take your mind off it. However, some of the sound effects are lost when you've only got a half-meg.

55%

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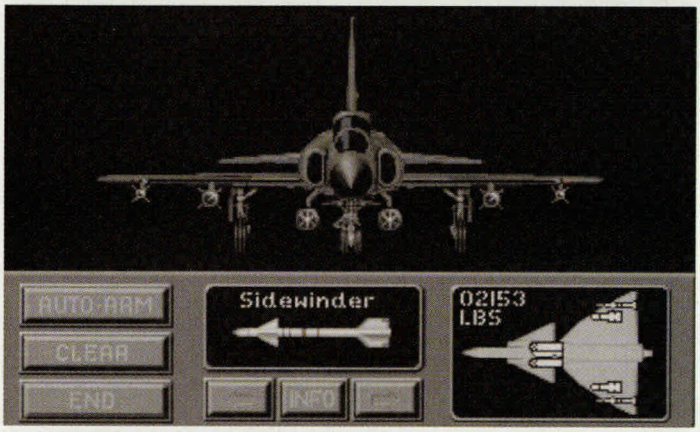
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AAAPRIL

Proprietors S.A and R.A Beech

(Below & right) Before you leave for your destination, it is advised that you look at the map of the area and the target's location. The correct route can be viewed, as can a close-up of your objective.

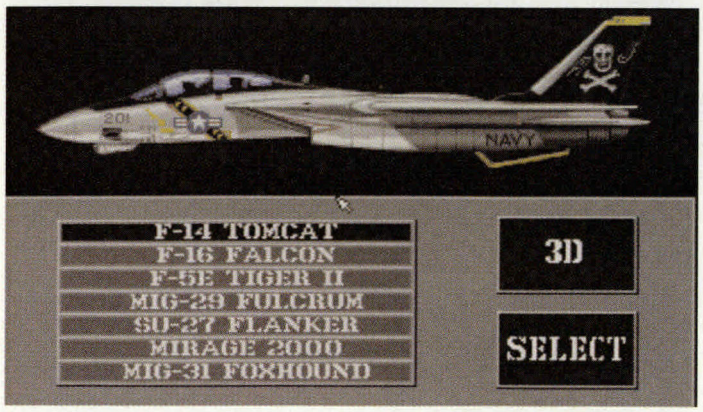


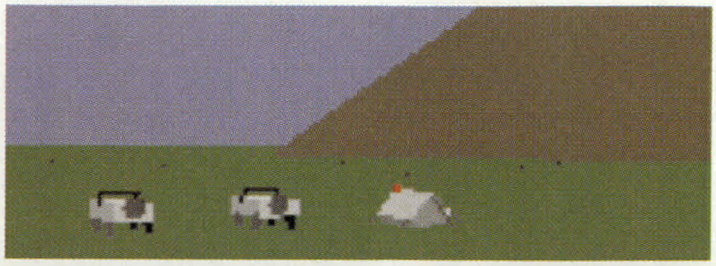


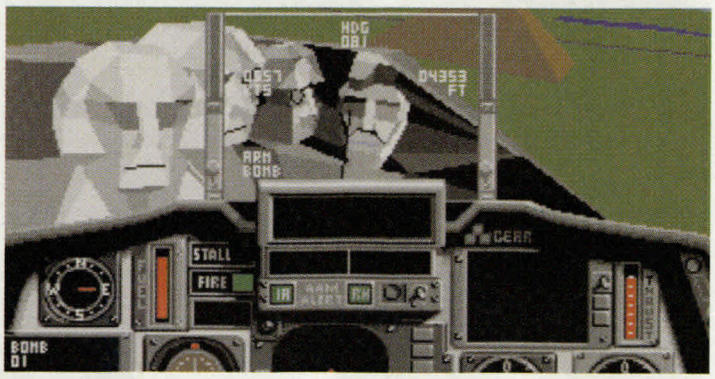
The warehouse holds some of the most technologically advanced weaponry in the air force today. You can choose to arm the plane yourself, or let the computer equip it with the standard payload.



(Below & above) There are seven aircraft to choose from, from all parts of the globe. Each has its strong points and its weaknesses, which are portrayed in the manual. Do you go for a high payload, or just have the edge on speed?







Fighter Bomber puts other flight simulations to shame because landmarks like Mount Rushmore can be flown around and even destroyed if you are carrying enough firepower!

ACTIVISION £29.99

FIGHTER BOMBER

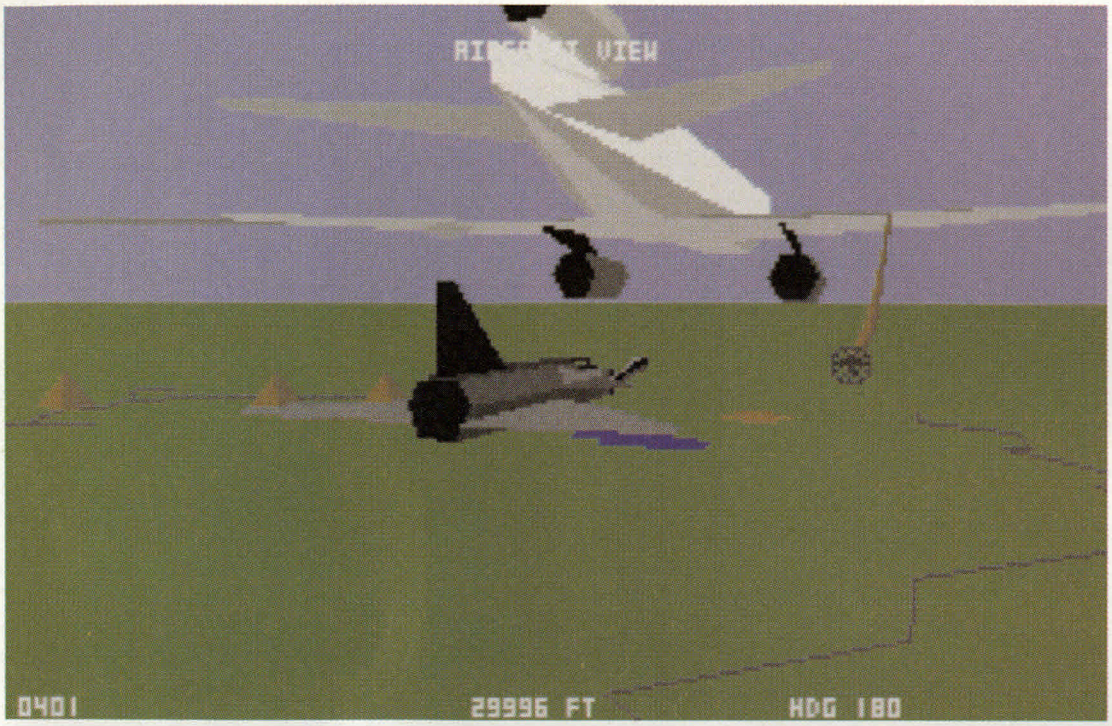
The Curtis E LeMay trophy is the prize that every bomber squadron wishes to win, and since 1958, pilots across the globe have battled each other in order to gain possession of the prestigious award. American squadrons have held the title most often, but Britain has been known to snatch the award on numerous occasions. There are seven different aircraft for you to pilot, ranging from an American McDonnell Douglas F-15E, to the Russian MIG-27 Flogger D. They each have their strong and their weak points, and by finding these out, you can select the best plane for each mission. Each plane can be viewed in both 2D or 3D, and technical information can be called up at any time as well. As well as choosing the aircraft you want to fly, Fighter Bomber allows you to select the plane which will

ALEX

Quality flight simulators are quite plentiful these days, so Bomber already had its work cut out for it. The graphics are impressive, and the planes are easy to get to grips with. The up-date is smooth, but slows when features like Mount Rushmore are on-screen. The wide choice of aircraft is a big bonus, as it gives you a taste of seven of the latest military hardware. Overall, Bomber was well worth the wait and should appeal to both the experienced pilot and the beginner alike!

STEVE

For me, Bomber has come as something of a disappointment. I was led to believe by all the press releases and hype that it was going to be THE flight/combat sim - unfortunately, this isn't the case. Instead, the gameplay seems to take a secondary place to the attractive graphics, and features untaxing missions. That said, the missions Bomber offers make it ideal for a novice pilot and, whilst not living up to my expectations, it is still worth checking out.



OVERALL RATING

70%

(Left) If you are flying a lengthy mission, it is more than likely that you will have to refuel. Along comes the tanker and lowers the fuel pipe. A steady hand is needed if you are to receive the full complement of fuel.

(Below) Another unique feature that Bomber offers is the ability is to follow the missile towards the target. If your aim is good, the objective will explode in a mass of smoke.

SOUND

The usual hum of the engine, as well as various explosions. A single rock track plays during loading.

53%

GRAPHICS

Highly-detailed 3D aircraft that fly smoothly across the skies. The up-date is smooth, but becomes slow when the screen is cluttered.

63%

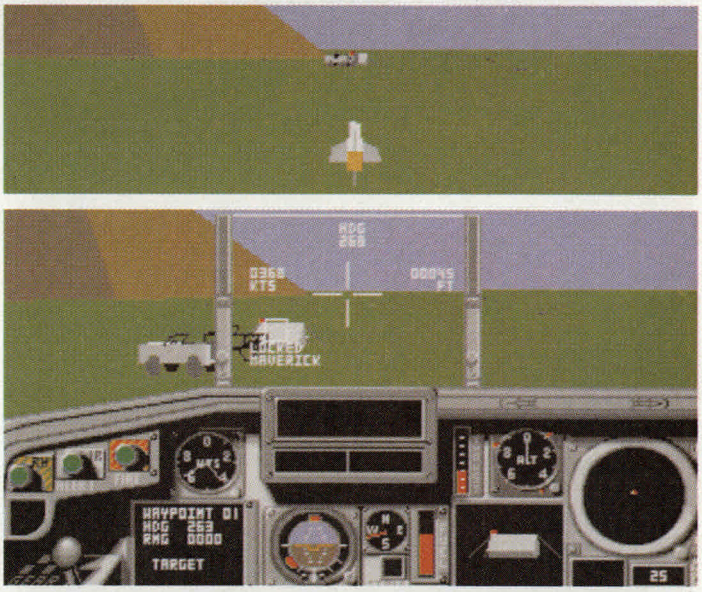
dogfight against you. These are faster and more manoeuvrable than your bomber, so you can't run away. You just have to turn around and lock-on with you AAM's and blow his plane apart.

To begin with, a mission has to be selected. These can be anything from Free Flight, which allows you to practise bomb runs and in-flight refuelling, to missions that send you out to destroy countless SAM sites, which will put your piloting skills to the test. To begin with, the operations are simple, requiring you to destroy an enemy camp, but later levels expect you to fly like a bird. You can only fly the harder missions after the easier missions have been completed successfully.

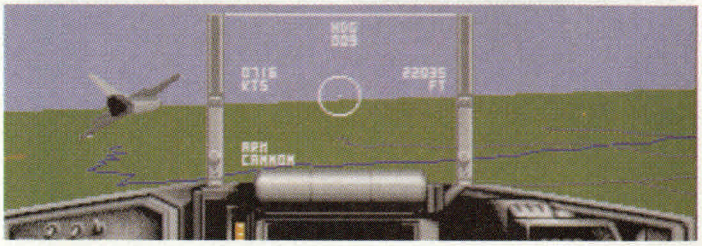
There is also the option to design your own objectives, this being done by a simple-to-use, choose-and-place method. Before you take off, you have to arm your aeroplane with the various weaponry that is in the inventory. Be careful when selecting your armament, because it is no good picking air-to-air missiles if the target you are heading for is a missile silo! The inclusion of a quick-reference guide is useful for first-time flyers, but Activision haven't included full details on piloting and combat, which could leave a total novice in at the deep end because he is unable to lower the landing gear when coming in to land. Once you are airborne, you can fly around until your heart's content (or until you run out of fuel), but you don't win medals for cruising around the countryside. The aim of the game, is to pilot your bird to a set way-point, and destroy the target once you have arrived. Then you have to return to your home base where a successful landing is called for. If you are too high or are picked up by radar (or if you are just unlucky!), the enemy will launch a fighter-aircraft to come and deal with you - defeat ending in the explosion of your plane and the death of your faithful pilot.

DOUG

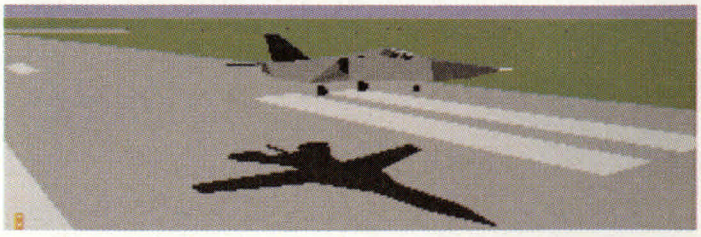
Whilst instantly appealing on the graphics front, I found the gameplay behind Bomber a little too simplistic. None of the missions were particularly involving, and I found myself yearning for a bit more action. Still, as with Lucasfilm's Battlehawks 1942, Bomber is an ideal stepping stone for anyone daunted by the more complex flight sims.



This time you only have a tent to destroy. Select the Maverick, lock on target and let your load loose!



Dogfighting is another part of the simulation that needs to be mastered. It is easy to destroy the enemy with a Sidewinder, but you only have limited shots: use the cannon. Nah, Eat this, Ruskie!



The part that every pilot dreads about flying is landing after each mission. You should be okay if you keep your nose up and your wings level!

OVERALL RATING

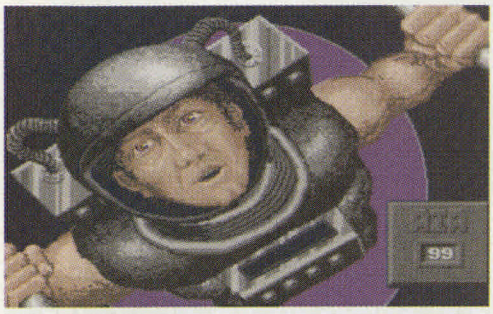
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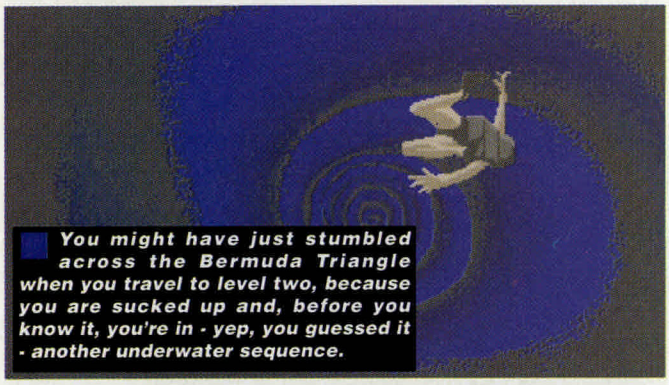
AQUANAUT



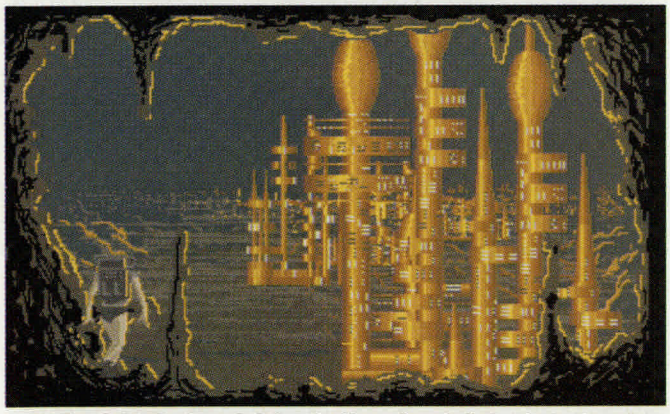
After diving out of the boat, you swim along and level your harpoon at the oncoming sea creatures. In the distance, the Ramanishi flagship. You gonna' need something powerful to destroy this one!



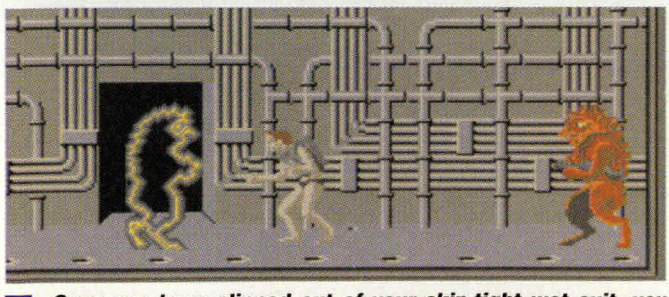
When you become low on oxygen, there's bound to be an air tank nearby. Just pop your head inside to gulp in your next few breaths before diving back into the depths.



You might have just stumbled across the Bermuda Triangle when you travel to level two, because you are sucked up and, before you know it, you're in - yep, you guessed it - another underwater sequence.



The fabled city of Atlantis lies ahead, but what else does this aquatic adventure have in store for you?



Once you have slipped out of your skin-tight wet suit, you must explore the city whilst killing off the evil mermen by throwing one of your daggers.

Fissionchips? I had that for tea, didn't I? Well, I doubt it, because you'd have to have a big mouth to fit them in! Aquanaut, their latest title, is set under the Ocean, and is based around the fabled lost city of Alantis. Taking on the role of Ric Flair, you have to guide your courageous Aquanaut through the perilous depths of the sea, before encountering the Ramanishi Flagship. Whilst in the big drink, you will come across a number of different underwater inhabitants, ranging from the deadly jellyfish to the gentle mermaid. Each level stretches on for what seems an eternity, and I bet you're thinking "You're bound to run out of oxygen". Have no fear, because along the way, a large machine produces air, so all you have to do is pop your head up into the hole and refill your life-support tanks. Watch out for the equipment pods along the way aswell, because they can house some pretty handy stuff.

The next level is somewhat different, because you have to negotiate the sub-aquatic caverns, and tackle monsters such as the deadly Rockadile. Items such as dynamite are particularly useful, because all too often you find yourself blocked in and thus you'll have to blast your way out. After battling your way through the labyrinth of tunnels, you will find yourself in Atlantis. At this point, your mission is unclear. However, you know the mermen aren't very friendly and contact with them is deadly. You must search your way through the lost city before you can eventually finish the level.

DOUG

Aquanaut is a game that isn't going to keep you amused for very long. There are only three levels of play, and it takes you next to no time to work out the few puzzles in each one. The first level has you swimming along for what seems an eternity, avoiding various underwater nasties, only to spend a few seconds trying to work out how to destroy a submarine - and normally results in you getting killed and sent back to the beginning. Not something I'd recommend.

ALEX

Aquanaut is a playable little game that should keep you engrossed for a short time, and you don't need long to advance to the later levels. Stages one and two are pretty much the same, but level three makes a change from the usual underwater frolics. Aquanaut doesn't have much lasting appeal, and for that reason you should seriously think about paying twenty-five pounds before plunging in at the deep end.

GRAPHICS

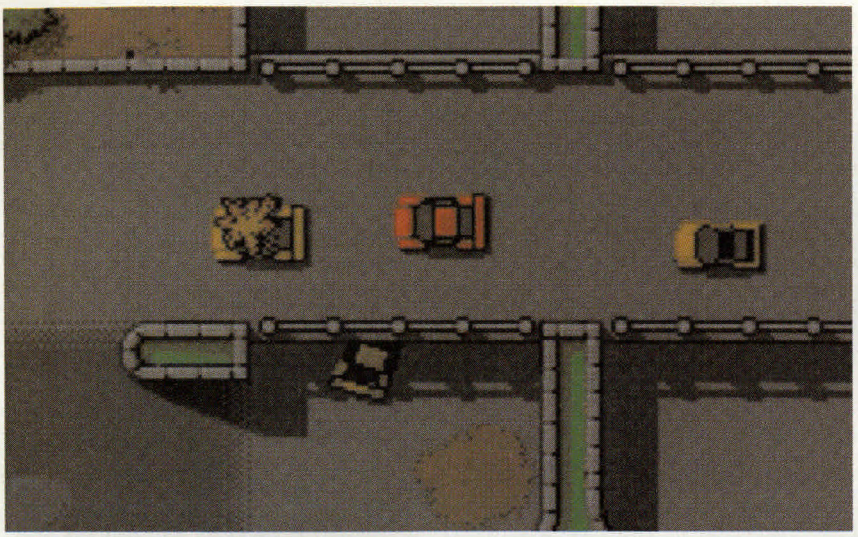
Simple but effective backdrops with nicely animated sprites. Scrolling is jerky at times, and there is not much variety in colours.

50%

SOUND

Nice appropriate theme tune at the beginning. During the game, the average grunt and explosion are the best you're going to hear.

55%



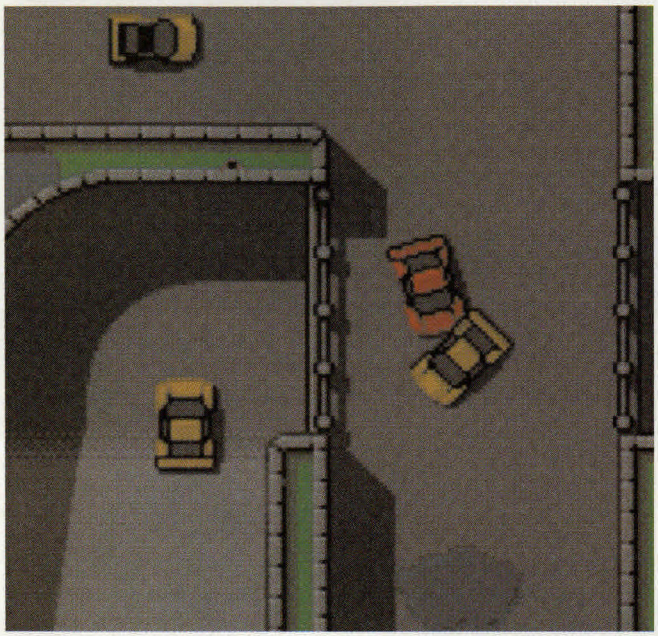
Gottim! If you are having trouble passing one of the computer-controlled cars, a front-mounted missile is essential. All it needs is a quick prod of the firebutton whilst pushing the joystick up and - blam - there`s one less contender for the prize money!

OVERALL RATING

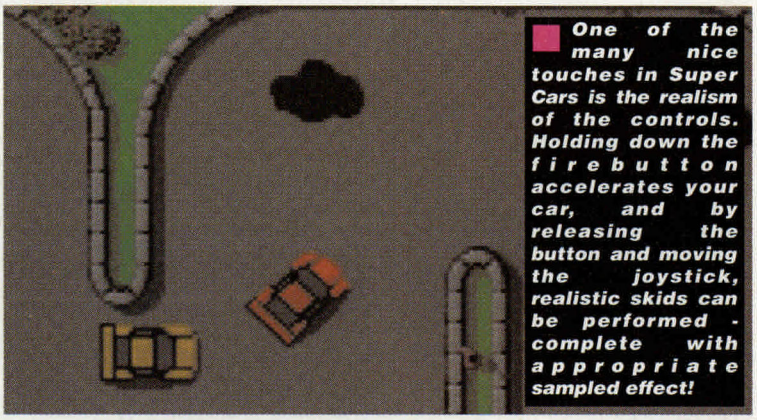
74%



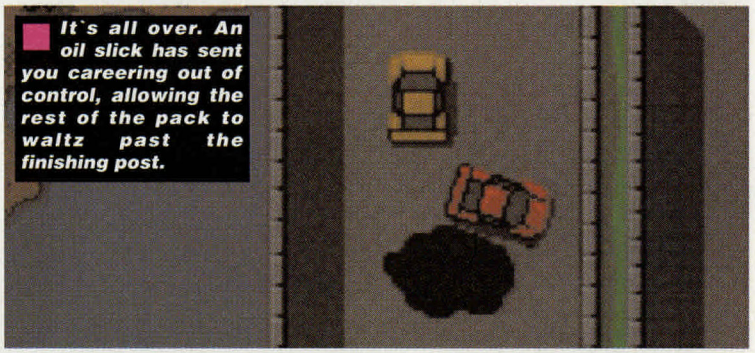
At the bottom of the screen, a row of coloured bars depict how well your car is bearing up. As the bars begin to shrink, it indicates that your tyres, fuel and bodywork are in need of repair and replenishing, and that you should go to the garage after the race.



The later levels in the game, throw more and more hazards at you, and pit you against more and more computer-controlled racers. Here, the competition is so great that, unless you get a new car, you won`t stand a chance. Luckily, though, if you fail, there is a password system to allow you to continue on the later stages.



One of the many nice touches in Super Cars is the realism of the controls. Holding down the firebutton accelerates your car, and by releasing the button and moving the joystick, realistic skids can be performed - complete with appropriate sampled effect!



It`s all over. An oil slick has sent you careering out of control, allowing the rest of the pack to waltz past the finishing post.

send you spinning out of control if passed over.

Providing you are amongst the first three past the winning line, you are awarded a cash bonus. With this safely stowed away in your pocket, along with the five-thousand pounds you begin with, you can then enter either a garage or a car showroom to uprate your vehicle. A new car costs a considerable amount of money, but gives you the much-needed acceleration and road-holding power you will need. However, these extras can be bought from the nearby garage, along with useful extras which include front and rear-based missiles , extra retro power, anti-skid tyres, and the like. Unlike with the more expensive cars, though, any extras bought from a garage will only last you for the duration of the race, and must be purchased again if you feel you will need them.

STEVE

If you hanker for the days of Miner Willy and when games relied more on gameplay than flashy graphics and sound, then Super Cars is right up your street. The game`s appeal isn`t in its appearance, but in its simplistic gameplay. The controls for the cars are perfect, and realistic skids and corners can be made with ease. However, the one problem with Super Cars is that there aren`t enough tracks and that there isn`t enough variety in its hazards. If Super Cars had included jumps and more obstacles I wouldn't hesitate in recommending it; as it is, give it a whirl first.

GRAPHICS

Although the sprites are basic and unimpressive, they work well within the style of the game, and are bright and effective.

57%

SOUND

It's all here: the squeal of tyres, engines revving, and a background tune. It`s certainly nice to see for a change a race game that doesn`t just rely on a humming noise.

68%

ALEX

Super Sprint still rates amongst my all-time favourite games, but now Super Cars challenges it for the top. Although the sprites are somewhat small, the sound is good and the game is just so enjoyable to play. I think the scrolling track is better than an overhead view of the complete circuit as it allows the tracks to be wider and more complex without cluttering the screen. Overall, Super Cars is one of the best car games I have played. Brilliant.

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RINGS OF MEDUSA

Things went badly for the Kingdom after you left. Shortly after your departure, the evil forces of the demoness Medusa attacked the various towns, and most of the inhabitants could only flee in horror. When you received the letter from your father, the King, informing you of this tragedy, you returned as quickly as possible; but unfortunately, you arrived only in time to see your father killed by Medusa`s men. You are the only hope for the Kingdom now.

Starting with just 1000 gold pieces, you must somehow make enough money to raise an army and find the five magical rings to defeat the demoness, Medusa. There are a selection of ways in which you can raise the money you need: trading or mining are the safest ways, but these can be both long and costly at the start of the game; on the other hand, you could get the money in a more dishonest way - by raiding the passing caravans; and for the more hasty players, there`s the quicker path of gambling, but this way is very risky.

Soon you will have enough money to build your army and search for the five rings that will force Medusa to fight you herself; but summoning Medusa is not the only power the rings have. Each time you find one of the rings and take it to a temple, you will gain some sort of extraordinary power, like knowing your enemy`s strengths and weaknesses, or your own army`s strength will be increased by 50% so that you will have an advantage over most of the armies you will encounter - particularly handy for when you meet Medusa.

DOUG

Take your run-of-the-mill trading game, cross it with Defender Of The Crown and what have you got? Rings Of Medusa. However, you also make quite an addictive little game in the process. Strategy plays a large part within the game, so it`s not a game you can sit down and play quickly, and for this reason I can see it not appealing to a few people. But if you like the trading games, and want something a bit different, then this might just be the one you`re looking for.

ALEX

Rings of Medusa is best described as being a trading/war game, with a hint of gambling for good measure. I found the game difficult to get into, but once I had persevered through the opening stages, I found it to be a joy to play. The graphics are well drawn and the sound has been produced to an equally high standard. All of this adds up to a better than average game - it's a shame the game is so hard to get into.

GRAPHICS

All the graphics within the game are of a relatively high standard, but it`s a shame that every city you enter looks the same inside a little variety would have been nice.

55%

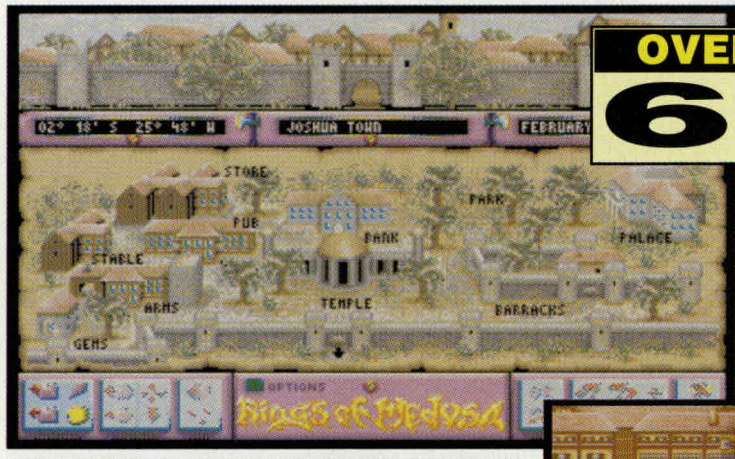
SOUND

Atmospheric screams, and horns being blown, give you a real sense of being there during the battles, but the game music can become a bit repetitive.

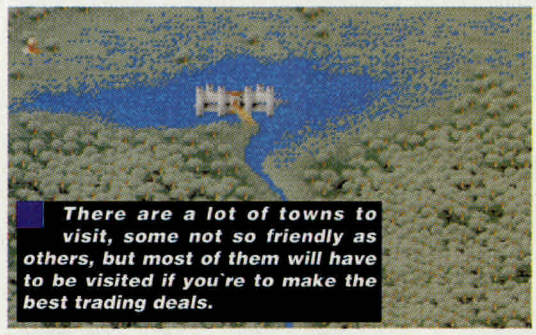
63%

OVERALL RATING

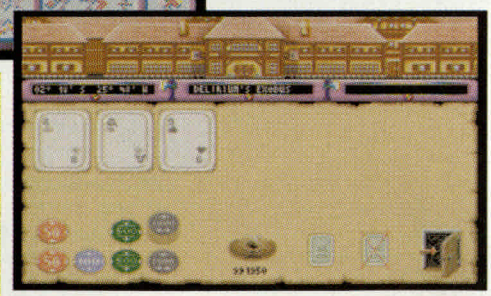
64%



With just the small sum of 1000 gold pieces, you enter a nearby town and look for somewhere you can buy some mining equipment, but I don`t think you`re going to be able to buy much.



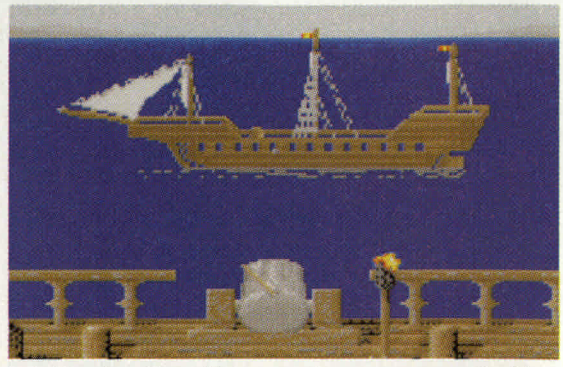
There are a lot of towns to visit, some not so friendly as others, but most of them will have to be visited if you`re to make the best trading deals.



Not being able to resist the urge any longer, you walk into the pub and put your chips on the table, only to quickly lose them. I wonder if they`ll take credit in here.

While wandering through the Kingdom, you bump into a hostile army. But depending on the terrain, you should only send in certain regiments to attack.





Turning the ship around, you prepare to blow your enemies out of the sea; but in the end, victory depends on how fast you can load a cannon.

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CONQUEROR

There have been quite a few tank simulations since the dawn of the computer age, and in most of them you played the part of the driver looking out from inside the awesome vehicle. In Conqueror the tank you control is viewed from the outside as it wanders around a Virus (the game by Firebird) -type landscape with the odd house and tree here and there for you to hide behind, or just simply blow to smithereens. This is just one of many differences between Conqueror and its predecessors.

There are also three types of gameplay involved in the game making it just about suitable for everybody. The first and probably most popular is the arcade game where you control your tank as it rumbles around battling to the death with wave after wave of enemy tanks. Next is the Attrition war, and here you control more than one tank. You start with a selection of tanks which are superior to those under the control of the computer, but gradually the the computer`s tanks increase in number until your force is outnumbered. Lastly there is the strategy level. This is the top level, and here both player and computer choose, from an increasing budget, which tanks to buy. The strategy game is similar to the last level but spotter planes and bombs can be used on the map mode (bird`s-eye view of the present landscape), and the game can also be won through secondary objectives (such as taking control of a certain area of land) so that you don`t have to destroy everything to be victorious.

Points will be awarded for each tank you knockout, and depending on the size of the tank, you will get a certain number of points added to your score and, as your score gets higher, the tank you currently control will be upgraded and instantly changed into the next grade of tank making things slightly easier (but not much). However, if you get killed you lose points, so getting into a bad situation could mean that you not only lose your life, but your tank`s grade as well, making things even worse. Each of the twelve tanks has its own specific statistics, such as how much armour it has on the front, rear and sides, and also its guns maximum armour penetration; so that it is not possible for the light tanks to destroy some of the larger tanks with a single shot from some positions.

Unlike the arcade game, on the strategy level the enemy tanks don`t show up on the map mode, so you have to send out a spotter plane to find out their locations (unfortunately, spotter planes cost points from your score), but you can also drop bombs in the map mode so that when, after 30 seconds, you go back to the proper 3-D view between 16 and 30 bombs will drop in a certain area destroying anything there. Good, eh!

ALEX

Stupendous graphics made David Braben's Virus (or Zarch) a game like no other, but the gameplay was difficult to get to grips with. Now Conqueror hosts the same quality of graphics, but the game is much easier to play and enjoy. Conqueror is one heck of a game, and should appeal to any sort of games player, be he a strategist or a shoot 'em-up addict, because the different elements of the game are so flexible - you can play using only strategy or arcade, as well as a mixture of the two. Have a look at Conqueror, you won't regret it!

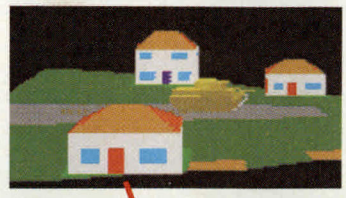
SOUND

No in-game music, and only a few sound effects. Nevertheless, they certainly add to the war-torn atmosphere.

48%



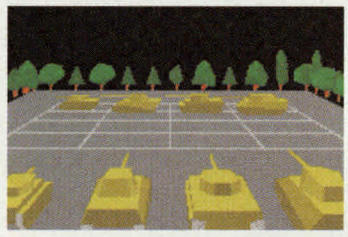
Press F1 to F8 to get the low down on the various tanks you can come across as well as the statistics on your own tank. As the armour shows, your strong point is the front of your tank.



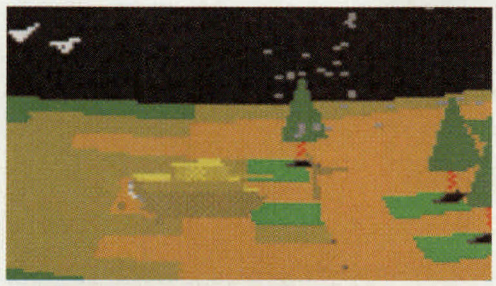
The map mode will give you a bird`s-eye view of the landscape. The various shades of green show the highest areas of ground, and the blue lines indicate rivers.

1. ***A cyan square represents your tank.***
2. ***Buildings are shown as red circles.***
3. ***Purple squares indicate an enemy tank.***
4. ***A spotter plane used to find the enemy tanks.***
5. ***16 to 30 bombs will be dropped in this area, taking anything with them.***
6. ***The objective. Hold this area for 60 seconds and you win the game.***

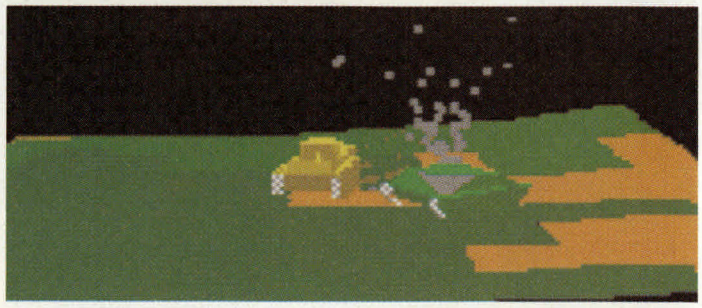




A whole load of tanks are at your disposal in the strategy part of the game, but what that load will consist of is up to you. The more tanks you have, the better (well, most of the time).



Taking careful aim you take out a rather dangerous looking tree that has just thrown itself in front of your tank. All that's left is a frazzled stump and a few startled birds.



No one messes with you, or at least if they do they don`t last that long. Turning your turret and pulling the trigger, you rid yourself of one of the many enemy tanks.



Conqueror allows you to control your tank by a number of methods, but by far the easiest is by using two joysticks. Thus, in a moment of sheer inventiveness, the AA team produced the wonderful device shown here. Now we could, if we were money-grabbers, sell this neat-looking unit to you, but, no - we want to share it with you, our beloved readers. OK, here`s what you need:

2 X joysticks.
1 X lashings of masking tape.
1 X Stanley knife.

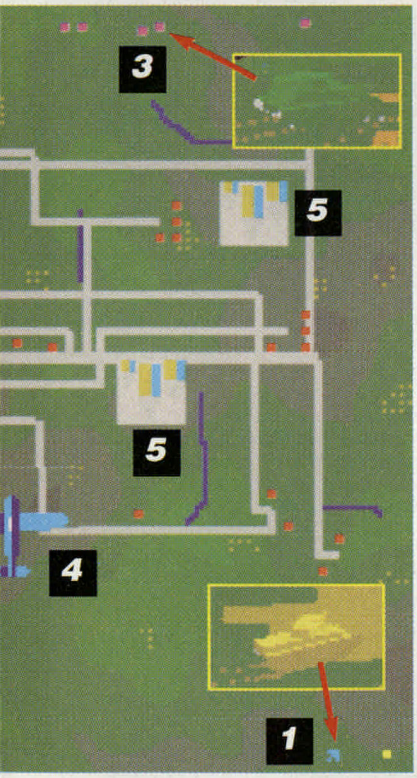
Now, the method. Place the two joysticks next to each other. Take the tape and wrap it around the two `sticks until only the shafts can be seen. Now take the Stanley knife and cut around where the buttons are (note: get a parent to help here - Stanley knives are dangerous). Voila! A brilliant add-on!

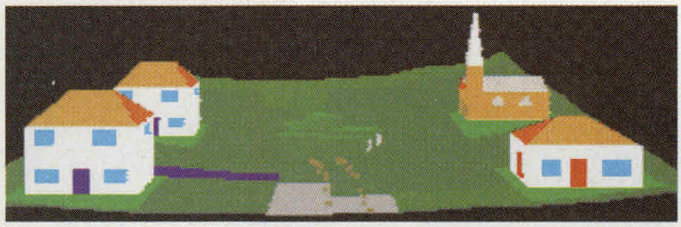
OVERALL RATING

76%

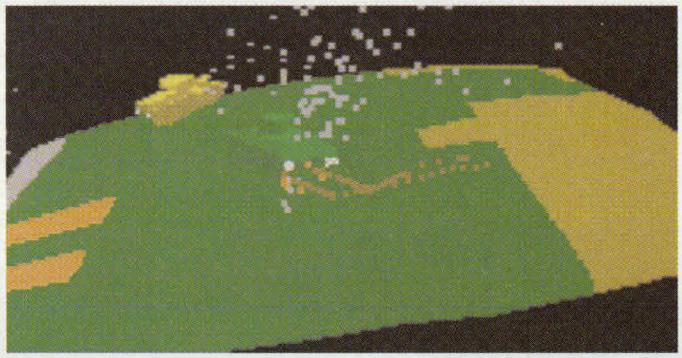
STEVE

I was a great fan of Virus, but I found that it didn`t have a great deal of lasting appeal. Conqueror, on the other hand, has more options, and thus allows the player to mould the game to his own requirements. Of the three gameplay modes available, I was more interested in the arcade level, but the other two stages will appeal to any budding Rommels out there. The action is by no means unrelenting, and I have a few doubts about whether its repetitive nature will glue you to the screen for long, but you could do a lot worse than Conqueror.





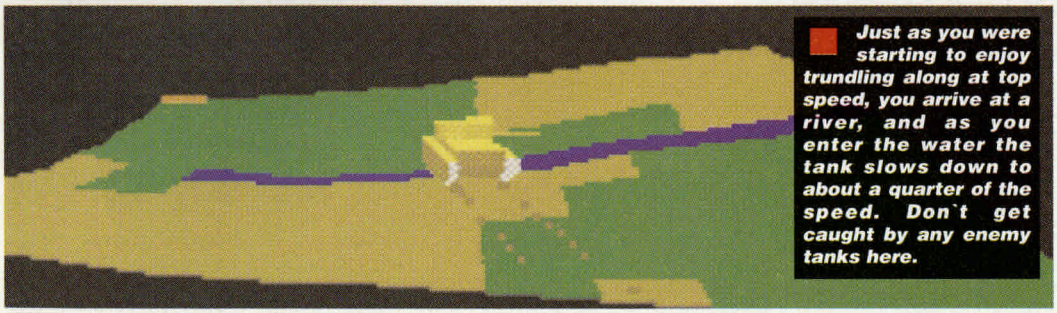
At last you get enough points to upgrade to the next tank, but don`t think that`s going to make things easy, because the enemy`s tanks are also that bit more formidable.



A few war wounds will have to be endured if you`re to take your victory prize, but if you sustain too many, just retreat from the battle for about half a minute and the tank will repair itself.

DOUG

Conqueror is the best tank game I`ve ever played, and it`s really addictive. The graphics are very good and the update on the 3-D graphics is amazingly fast. The hardest thing about the game is the controls, but there are so many different options on how to control the tank that there`s got to be one that you`ll be able to get along with. Whether you`re an arcade fanatic or a strategy freak, this game is a must.



Just as you were starting to enjoy trundling along at top speed, you arrive at a river, and as you enter the water the tank slows down to about a quarter of the speed. Don`t get caught by any enemy tanks here.



Oh well! You can`t win them all, and with three tanks to your one it doesn`t look as though you`re going to win this one either.

GRAPHICS

The graphics are virtually identical to those in Firebird`s game, Virus, but this is no bad thing and they do the game justice. The 3-D perspective is good and the tank feels very realistic as you control it.

71%

ARCANA £19.95

ROTOR

On first impressions Rotor looks like a clone of the 8-bit classic, Thrust, with the graphics of the more modern 16-bit game, Cosmic Pirate, but the game is far more than that. You start as a pilot that has not yet gained any experience in handling a Rotor space craft. Before you can be sent on any missions you must train and prove your skills in the Rotor manoeuvre simulator. There is a choice of three different fortresses in which you can gain prestige units by collecting the various cargoes with your ship`s tractor beam and then make your way to an appointed coordination. As your prestige units grow in number you will be able to advance to the next simulator to improve your combat skills.

As in the previous case, the combat simulator requires you to collect a selection of cargoes with your tractor beam, but this time there are a few antagonists (enemies) who will try to destroy you and your Rotor whenever they get the chance. Once you have gained enough prestige units on this simulator, you will then be considered fit to be sent on a mission, but this time your mistakes will be for real.

The cargoes you collect in the missions will be quite useful, giving you extra fuel and parts for your ship, but most of the time the containers have pearls or a sun crystal in them; with out the sun crystal you cannot leave the present level. As you progress throughout the various stages, from the simulators to the missions, each time you advance a stage you will be given a password so that next time you play the game you can start from roughly where you left off

ALEX

Rotor is a clone of both Oids and Thrust, there is no doubt about it, but I'm glad to say it is just about as good as the other two. The controls are a doddle to use, unlike the afore-mentioned, but the graphics are bland and the sprites have been used on various other games, but the gameplay that made the others so good has been retained. Sadly, I think this game is aging too much, and there is nothing that anybody hasn't seen before.

DOUG

Although Thrust is a bit on the old side now , it`s still a very addictive little game, and Arcana have managed to take this addictiveness and combine it to make a game just as good and with a lot extra. The only fault I can see with the game is that within just a few goes you can get to the missions and these aren`t that much harder than the simulators. Rotor is a good little game, but maybe a bit on the easy side.

GRAPHICS

Well to say they looked similar to Cosmic Pirate would be an understatement, but nevertheless, they are good and very well drawn with a good use of colour.

47%

SOUND

At first the music doesn`t sound that good, but once you`ve some of the in-game tracks you realize how good the sound really is.

63%

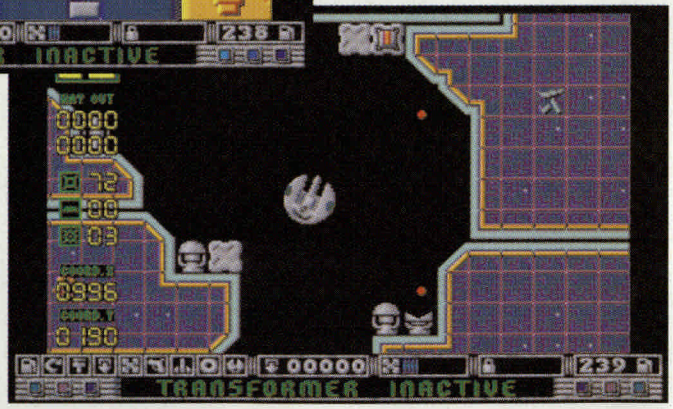
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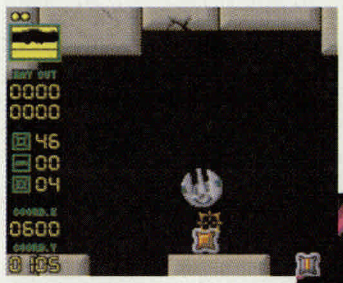
61%



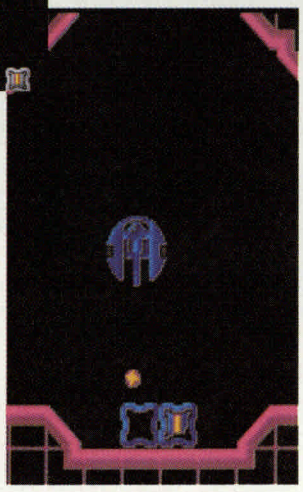
Starting off in the simulators, you get to grips with the controls of your Rotor, but even with all this practice you are still going to have your work cut out against the real antagonists.

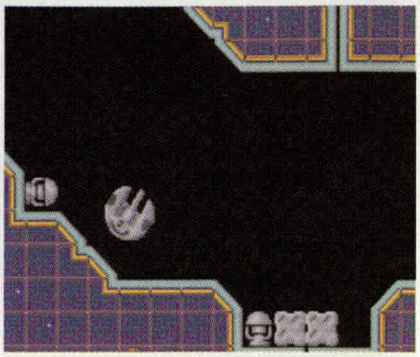
(Right) At last you make it to the real missions, and suddenly wish you hadn`t. The number of containers to collect has trebled, and so have the antagonists.





(Above & right) Pressing the fire button, you blow away the outer casing of a nearby container, and then carefully use the thrusters to gently glide towards the contents with your tractor beam on, and then, as soon as you have the cargo on board your ship, you return to the thrusters to get you away from the closing wall, but before you move on, you quickly destroy what`s left of the container for extra points.





Thrusters can certainly keep you out of a lot of trouble, but use them to much and you`ll find yourself in an even worse state. With no fuel left you glide helplessly to your doom.

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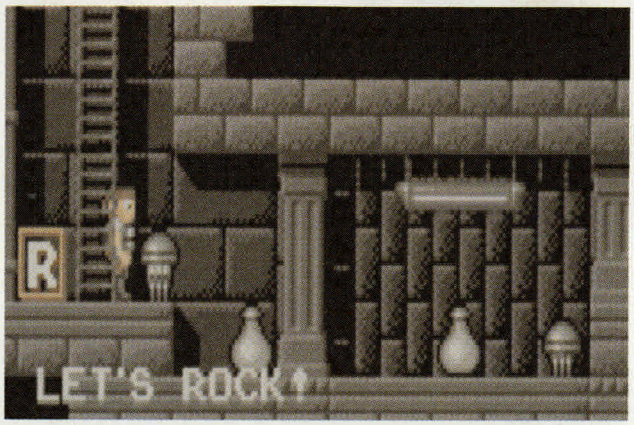
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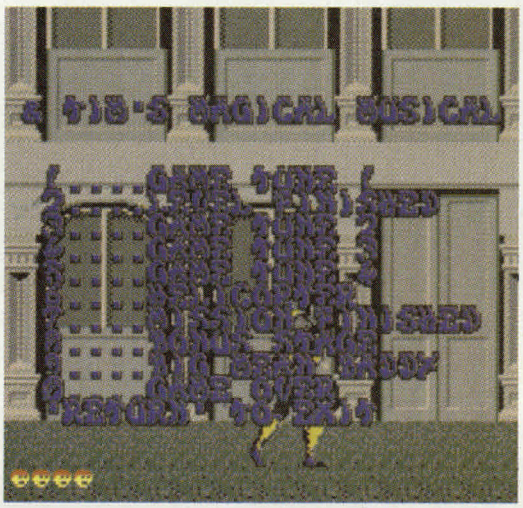
ABSOLUTELY LOADSA TIPS

Another month, another GTGA. This month has been really awkward for the team. I was off for a week with the flu, and even now am still trying to get rid of the last little coughs. Car problems were also a nightmare with me having to push my trusty automobile every time I wanted it to start. Steve the Ed has been enjoying himself however, without me to get under his feet and play my music loud (I wouldn`t mind, but it`s all hippy crap - ED). Alex, well, same as always, he makes the tea and coffee (with the odd review here and there). Sorry to all the people who sent in the Space Ace solution, but the lads from Norwich were the first people to send it in, and also have won themselves this month`s prize (only one, not four, mind you), so if they want to drop us a line and ask for Doug the Jug (me) we`ll get your choice of game off to you. See you next month.



CLOWN`O` MANIA - STARBYTE

Clowning around isn`t as easy as it seems in Starbyte`s arcade game, but thanks to A. Hawksby here`s a bit of a hand. During the game, press help at any time to gain more jumps and razors, but these extras won`t register until you actually jump or fire. This can be done as many times as you like.



SWITCHBLADE - GREMLIN

A nice little cheat here, that, funnily enough, is exactly the same as the cheat for that great little game, Rick Dangerous (not that surprising when you find out they were both programmed by the same people). Play the game and score enough to get you on the high score table, then instead of entering your name, type POOKY. Now start the game and press 1 to 5 for various different stages throughout the game.



SHINOBI - VIRGIN

If you were unfortunate enough to buy this arcade conversion then here`s a couple of tips that might make it that bit more interesting. Pause the game during play and type "LARSViii" for unlimited credits, or type "LARSViii" while holding down the left mouse button to enter the colour mode (controlled via the numeric keypad). Alternatively, pressing "Q" while the game is paused will let you enter the music mode. Lastly, as a little extra, when the shinobi logo appears on the title screen, hold down the letter "T" and move the mouse to control it.



TIME (PART II) - EMPIRE

Well, here`s the next stunning instalment of the cult soap arcade adventure, Time (well almost). But anyhow, here`s the next section of the game, and as before, it will be continued next month. So here it is.

MERLIN

Go to the horizontal slab in Stonehenge and pick up the sheeps eye, thus releasing the little man from a curse. Then talk to the man and he will reward you with a gold sovereign. Now put the eye back on the slab (cursing the man again) and give him back his gold sovereign in exchange for a lead mark. Now go to the ferryman and give him the mark. When you get to the other side of the river. talk to the ferryman and take the hand so that you can get through the caves and find Merlin. Once at Merlin`s, talk to him until he gives you an Amulet, then return to the Historisat.

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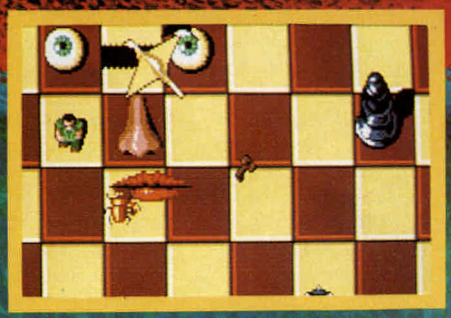
Once you've stepped through the gates, there's no going back.

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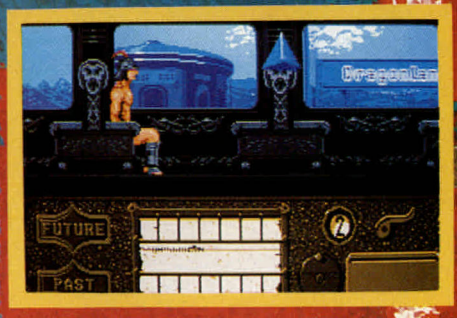
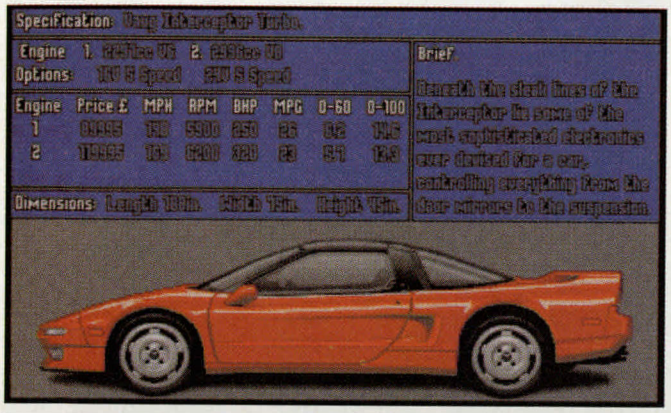


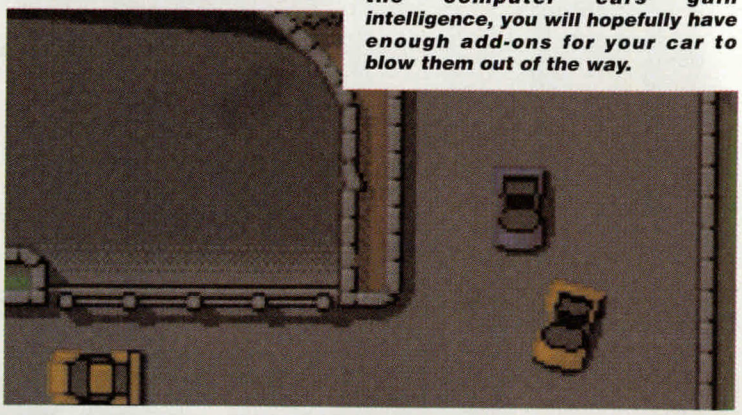
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(Below & right) Information on any of the cars up for sale is accessed by positioning your cursor over the car you are interested in and pressing fire. A complete list of specifications is then displayed, allowing you to view the car`s various attributes, and a price is also given, which varies depending on how powerful an engine you wish fitted. In addition, once you have entered the showroom, the smarmy salesman will offer you a part-exchange on your old car, and is normally quite generous with his offers.





(Below) There are nine tracks in all, and the best way to complete them is to take them in reverse order. For instance, you will stand more chance of completing the tortuous ninth track when racing against the dumb computer-controlled cars, than you would if racing against ones with intelligence. Besides, by the time the computer cars gain intelligence, you will hopefully have enough add-ons for your car to blow them out of the way.

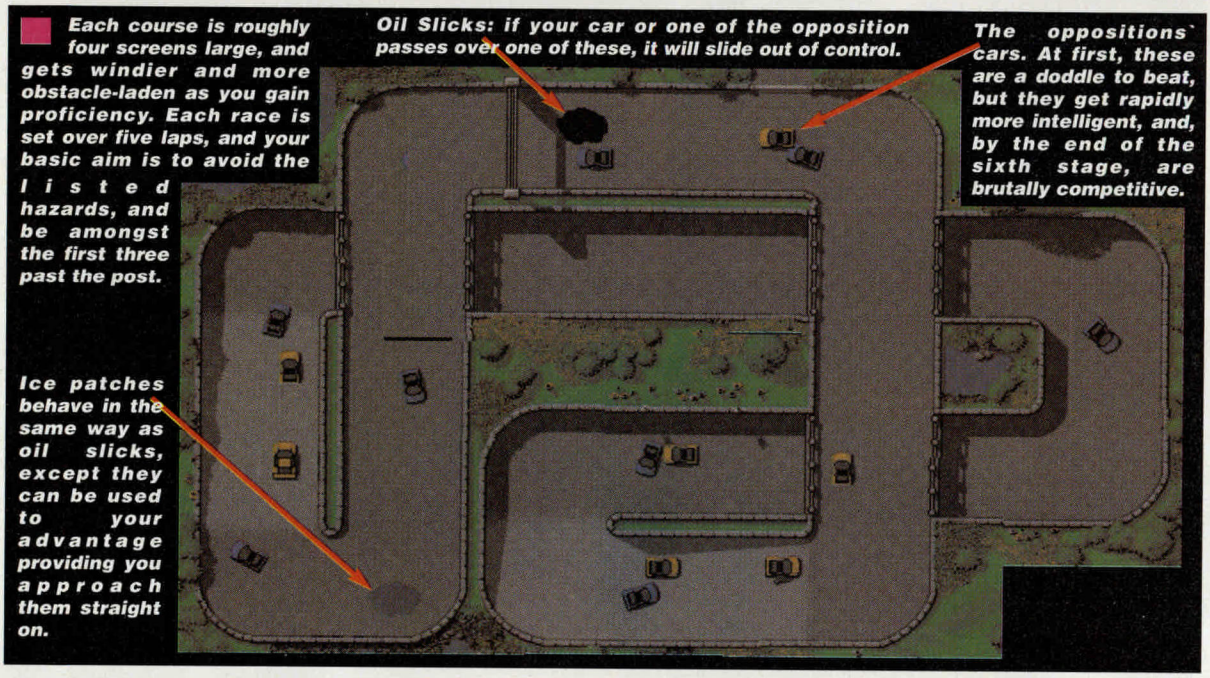


Each course is roughly four screens large, and gets windier and more obstacle-laden as you gain proficiency. Each race is set over five laps, and your basic aim is to avoid the listed hazards, and be amongst the first three past the post.

Oil Slicks: if your car or one of the opposition passes over one of these, it will slide out of control.

The oppositions` cars. At first, these are a doddle to beat, but they get rapidly more intelligent, and, by the end of the sixth stage, are brutally competitive.

Ice patches behave in the same way as oil slicks, except they can be used to your advantage providing you approach them straight on.





In between each race, your car can be refitted in the garage. Several useful items adorn the shelves, ranging from armour-plating to front-mounted missiles(!), but they only last for one race and must be topped up regularly.

DOUG

Super Cars is a fun and addictive game that grabs hold of you the moment you start playing, but even so, I think the game will become monotonous after a few days. As usual, trying and succeeding in upgrading your car is great, but once you have accomplished this there`s not a lot else to do. The game`s good while it lasts, but how long that will be I wouldn`t like to say.

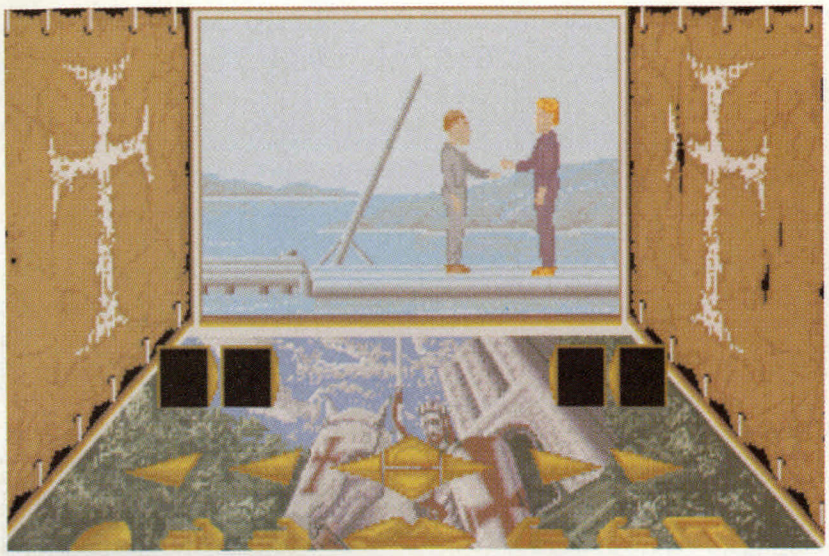
GREMLIN £19.95

SUPER CARS

The name Shaun Southern is synonymous with playable race games. His first game, the Commodore 64 classic, Kikstart (a motorcycle game which involves negotiating several obstacle-laden courses on a scrambling bike), was an instant hit thanks to its incredibly addictive gameplay, and it was one of the first budget games to receive any acclaim. Since then, Shaun has stayed with the motorbike/obstacle-course theme by producing a sequel to Kikstart (which was due to be converted to the Amiga via Mastertronic, but never appeared), and taking the concept a logical step further in Super Scramble Simulator for Gremlin. Now, Southern returns to the race track, this time opting for a vehicle of the four-wheeled variety.

Super Cars is an extension of the Super Sprint theme, and the aim of the game is essentially the same: compete across a number of tracks, winning races to earn money to buy enhancements for your car. All of the action is viewed from above the track, and each course is roughly four screens large, and scrolls around your vehicle, keeping it central. There are nine tracks in the competition, with three difficulty levels on offer, and your basic aim is to race around each course and be within the first three across the line. To begin with, you race against four computer-controlled competitors, but as you progress through the levels, further racers are added. In addition, for every race you successfully qualify in, the computer-controlled racers` intelligence is improved, and they become more of a challenge to beat. Likewise, to test your driving skills to the full, not only

do you have to contend with the unwanted attentions of the opposition and their constant ramming, but later courses add hazards, such as oil slicks, ice patches, and mud pools, and these will either slow you down or



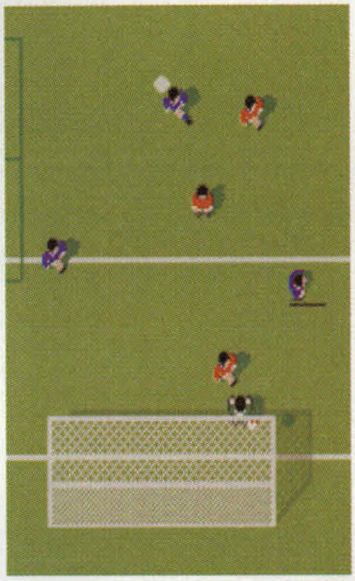
TIME (PART II) - EMPIRE

BACK AT HISTORISAT

When back at Historisat, go to the Protomek and give him the Amulet (remember to take it back). If you haven`t already spoken to the man in either Gallery 1, 2 or 3, find him and he will tell you about a vandal. Get a toffee pill from the diner and give it to the kid in amusements; then take him to the teacher at Gallery 4. Go back to the man in Gallery 1, 2 or 3 and he will give you an access code (007) for the labs. Get the gloves from the infirmary and put them on, then get the cigarette butt from the curator`s office and give this to the guard in the corridor. Enter the code to gain access to the labs, and go and speak to Randy. Get the ring from spares 2 and give it to the receptionist at the desk in exchange for hers. Give this ring to Randy, then go and wash your hands in the sink with the soap. Go back and get a rom from Randy and put this in the third circuit board in store 1; go to the time machine in Gallery 5 and enter the code 14521519 (Leonardo`s time).

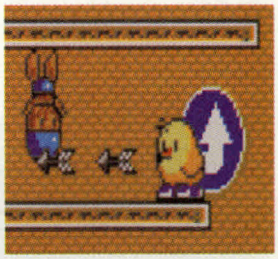
KICK OFF - ANCO

Penalties can be a bit of a pain, but once you know how, stopping them is a piece of cake. As the computer of a friend is getting ready to take a shot, just hold down the fire button, and the result will be either your keeper saving the ball or knocking it over the net. Cheers to Ben Simmons of Dartford for that.



NEW ZEALAND STORY - OCEAN

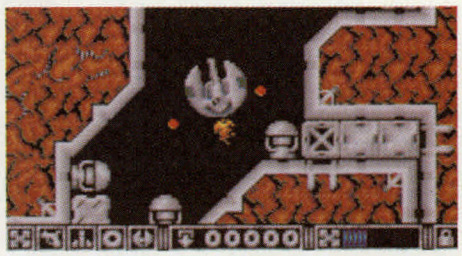
Here`s one for Terry Gallagher of Gloucester . Due to the fact that there are two versions of New Zealand Story going around, here`s a cheat that might work for the people who found the other cheatr published wouldn`t. On the title screen type FLYFFY KIWI, and now with a bit of luck you`ll have infinite lives.



OVERLANDER - ELITE

Equipping your car with the right stuff can be the winning or losing of the game, so for all you budding Overlanders out there here`s a few brief guide lines to help you on your way. Always take the more expensive mission as it`s not usually that much harder. On the first mission, buy the turbo conversion, and a few rams with what money you`ve got left over. In the second mission buy the super brakes, so that when you come up against the off-road gunners and barriers you can slow down quickly and shoot or avoid them. After this, buy the leanburn and then anything else you wish to waste your money on because you`ve already got the important stuff. It`s easiest to use your normal gun on the lorry, but rockets dispose of him easily if you have any problems.





ROTOR - ARCANA

This Thrust-type clone isn`t as easy as it looks, and getting to the mission section can be quite hard. But with the aid of a few three-letter cheats things will really start to speed up. To get to the various missions go to the advancement option and type one of the following: GAG, SLY, and AWE.

SUPER CARS - GREMLIN

If you`ve been playing this game for quite a while and are looking for a quicker way to get to the next level, then this is what you`ve been waiting for. When the game asks you to enter your name at the beginning of the game, enter the name ODIE and you`ll immediately start on the next level with the lovely red car at your disposal.



NINJA WARRIORS - VIRGIN

Not so much cheats, but amusing nevertheless. To enter the following words, put on the CAPS LOCK, enter the phrase, and then turn off the CAPS LOCK again.

THE TERMINATOR - Ninja body parts explode when you die.

MONTY PYTHON - Enemies come on backwards.

SKIPPY - Enemies bounce.

A SMALL STEP FOR A MAN - Moon gravity: jumping baddies will jump right off the screen.

STEVE AUSTIN - Pressing S during play will toggle slow motion on and off.

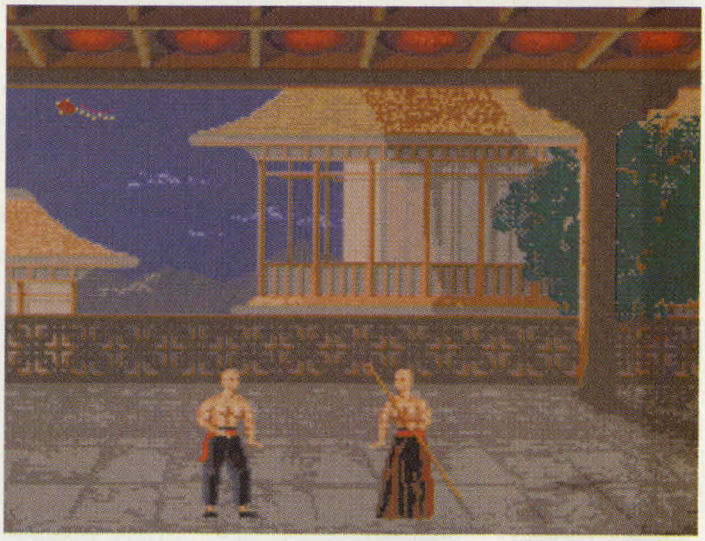


EYE OF HORUS - LOGOTRON

Thanks to Logotron themselves for the cheat mode you are about to read. In the credits section of the game, type "SPAM" and the game will start. You will now have infinite lives and you will not need colour-coded keys to be able to use the locked lifts.

GTGA: CHAMBERS OF SHAOLIN

Proving yourself to be the budding Bruce Lee can be quite difficult against those fighters, and unless your character is pretty hard you're not going to get very far. So if your wondering what chambers do what, then this guide will let you know.



SI ZHI BAN (TEST OF THE STICK)

Your master will attack you with the stick, using three different moves: a leg sweep, mid swing, and a high swing. The first two can be avoided by jumping in the air, and the high sweep is dodged by crouching down. If possible, 60 of these attacks should be dodged so that you can get the maximum bonuses to your attributes, any more will not add to the bonuses. You will be able to sustain 10 hits before you collapse from exhaustion, so care and quick reactions will be needed. I found that a good tip was to take two steps backward just after your master has stopped advancing on you, so it gives you a bit more reaction time before the stick hits, or if you're quick enough you can just walk backwards and out of reach of the attack.

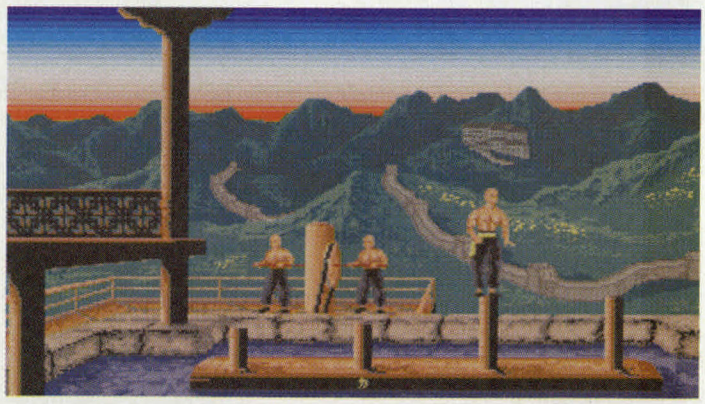


SI ZHI ROU LUANG (TEST OF AGILITY)

Agility is something you're going to need plenty of if you're to last very long against the opposition. Like the last test, this one improves your strength, defence force, and constitution, but it isn't as hard to complete as the Test of the Stick, and you will get a bigger reward at the end of it. Dodging is the name of the game here, and the amount of much energy you have left at the end will decide what bonuses you get (65% or more will be enough to guarantee maximum bonus points). Circular Yin and Yang signs are the only things that can be touched, and when you do, 20% of your energy will be restored

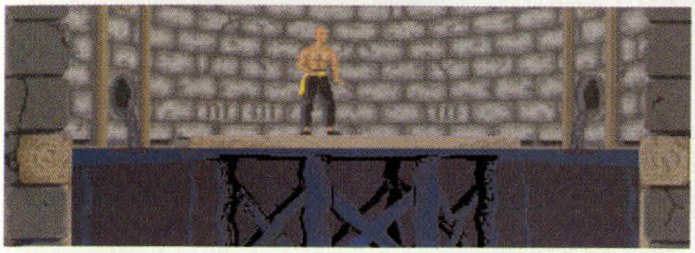
SI ZHI JUN SI (TEST OF BALANCE)

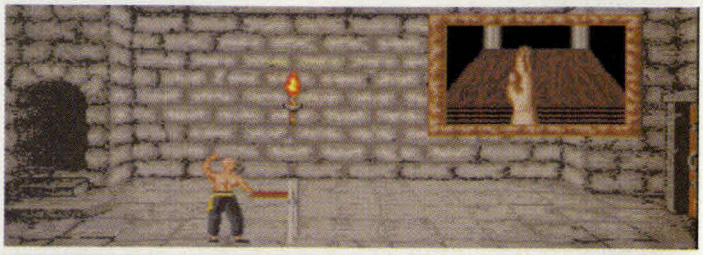
This is the last chance for you to upgrade your defence force (and get a bit more strength in the process). By jumping from one pole to another you must collect ten symbols as quickly as possible. Jumping from a fast-moving pole to a slow one doesn't usually prove to be a problem, but jumping the other way round is much more tricky and care should be taken. Remember you're allowed three goes at this test, so take chances on the first two goes, and if you still haven't completed it, then take a bit more time on the third one; 26 seconds or lower will be enough to get perfect scores on this test which will upgrade your strength and defence force.



SI ZHI KUAI (TEST OF SPEED)

Kick the ball and release both boards, within about 25 seconds to complete this test. The idea behind this test is pretty straightforward and so's the method in which you can complete it. The hardest part is quickly turning around, ducking and then kicking it, so that the ball goes in the opposite direction once you've released one of the boards. When the second board has been cut, keep your foot in the air so that the ball doesn't come back and knock you over. Strength and attack force will be affected by this test.





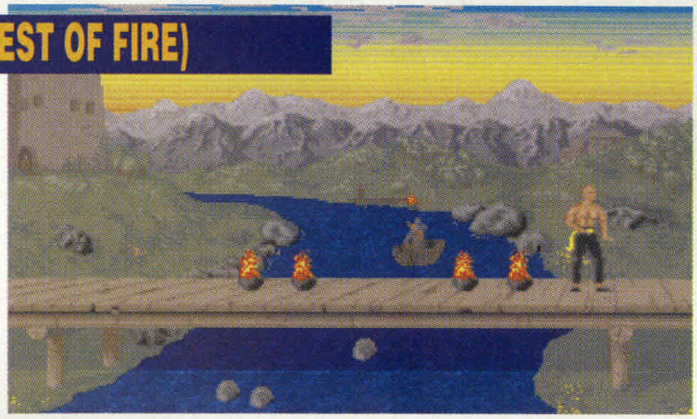
SI ZHI LI SI (TEST OF STRENGTH)

Just when your joystick thought it was safe to come out of the cupboard - along comes a waggling event. As long as you can waggle your joystick really fast, then this test is a cinch. Get your hand in the centre of the boards and waggle away, and if your arm is a bit knackered at the end of the stage, have a few minutes rest before you attempt the next set of boards. 4 is the maximum number of boards you will be allowed to break, and once you've done this, your strength, attack force, and constitution will be upgraded by a lot of points.

GTGA: CHAMBERS OF SHAOLIN

SI ZHI HOU (TEST OF FIRE)

This is your last chance to boost those skills. Strength, attack force, and constitution will be the skills that benefit. As the man throws the flaming baskets onto the bridge (after avoiding them) quickly kick each basket away. Be careful not to get trapped, and get rid of the baskets as quickly as possible, for if too many build up on the bridge you will fail the test. Around 30 baskets and full energy will ensure that you get top marks.



YOUR VERY OWN CHARACTER

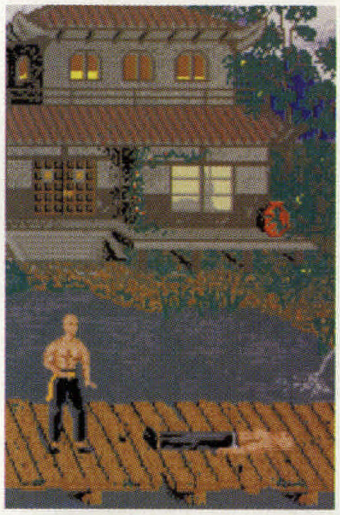
If you've managed to keep up with the guidelines above then you will now have a character whose statistics are all 100%.



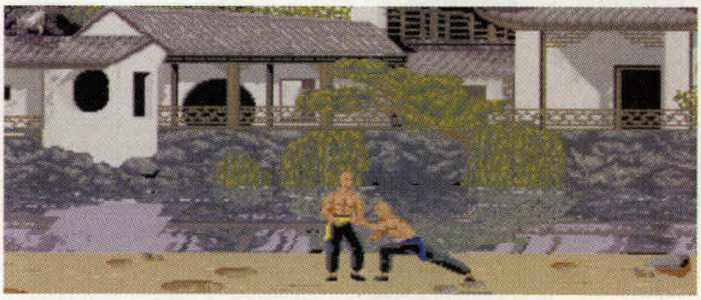
COMBATING YOUR OPPONENTS

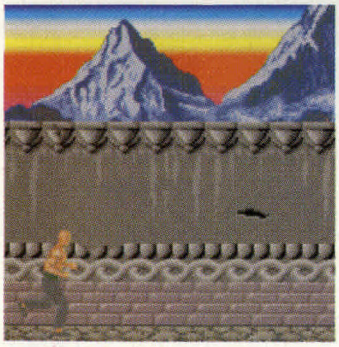
There are four fighters in all who you will have to kill before you will eventually arrive at the city walls, and each will be that little bit harder than the last one. Although you have quite a few moves available, like most martial arts games you need only use one or two to kill each opponent. I found that the easiest and best way to defeat the fighters was to use just the Tiger Claw and the Jump Kick moves. As a fighter approaches, use the Tiger Claw move, and if you time it right you should be able to keep him at a distance throughout the fight. However, now and then the fighter will jump and avoid the blow. If this does happen, quickly do a jump kick and, as he lands, your foot will collide with his head and knock him to the ground inflicting a lot of damage. This will work on all opponents if timed right.









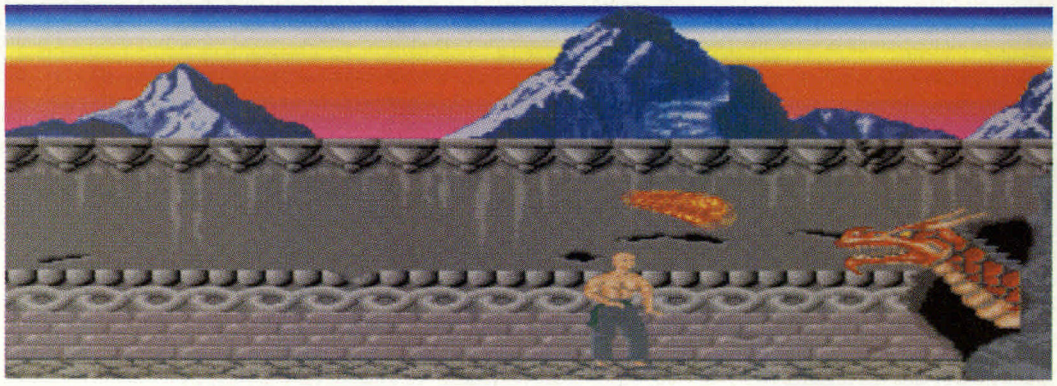


THE CITY WALLS

Pretty easy this. All you have to do is run along as fast as possible, and jump each time you see a boulder, and duck each time you see a bird. Don't worry too much if you get hit, because you will lose hardly any energy.

AND THE CITY GATES

This is what you went through all this vigorous training for; but even with all that skill, will you have enough energy left to defeat the dragon? As soon as you see the dragon, go forward and kick him in the head, and keep this up until he opens his mouth and breathes some fire at you. When he does this, run to the left and when the flames are about an inch away from the dragon, run forward straight through the fire and start kicking the dragon again. Keep this up and, provided you didn't get too badly beaten up by the fighters, it'll be a piece of cake.



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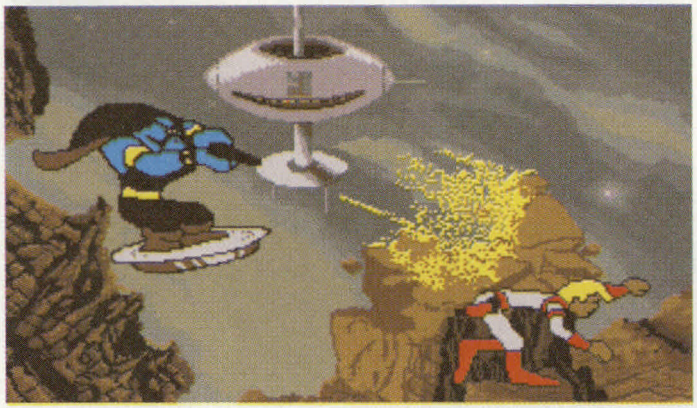
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GTGA: SPACE ACE

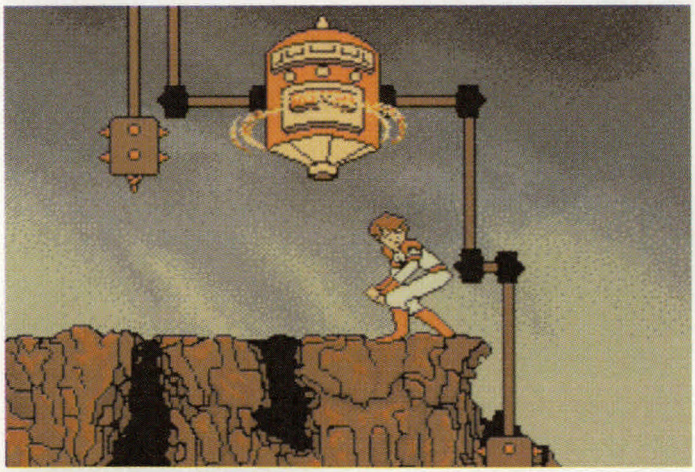
Blimey! We've only just had this in for review, and already a couple of cocky so-and-sos have finished it! Anyway, congratulations go to Howard, Jim, Paul and Shuff, who hail from Norwich, who are, as far as I can tell, the first people to complete this four-disk epic - what's more, they did it in less than half a day. Don't some people just make you sick! Oh well, let's get on with the solution.First, a quick warning: there are times when Ace/Dexter will move himself without your help, so be prepared!

1 - AVOIDING BORF



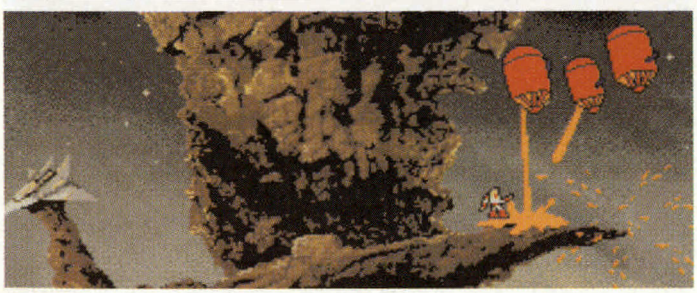
Move RIGHT just before Borf's third shot, then move LEFT to avoid Borf's second shot. Finally, move DOWN straight away.

2 - THE CRUSHER



As soon as Ace appears, move RIGHT. Wait until the next crusher has risen, then move LEFT. Once again, wait for the crusher to rise again, and then move LEFT again. Then, when the last crusher rises, move LEFT again.

3 - EVADING THE ROBOTS



Easy, this one. Move DOWN when the robots start to fire, and then UP when Ace is standing on the rock.

4 - DOCKING

To land on Borf's danger-filled station safely, as your ship turns to go down, quickly press UP to prevent a nasty crash.

5 - MONSTER MUNCH

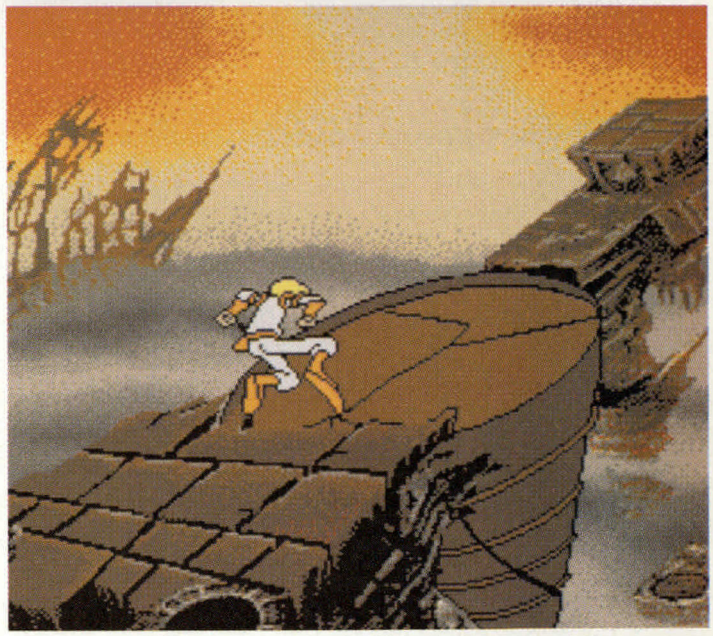


As soon as the slimey green creature bears down on you, press FIRE to ignite his tonsils!

6 - IT'S JUST A JUMP TO THE RIGHT

Move RIGHT, and as Ace stumbles, move UP to leap to safety.

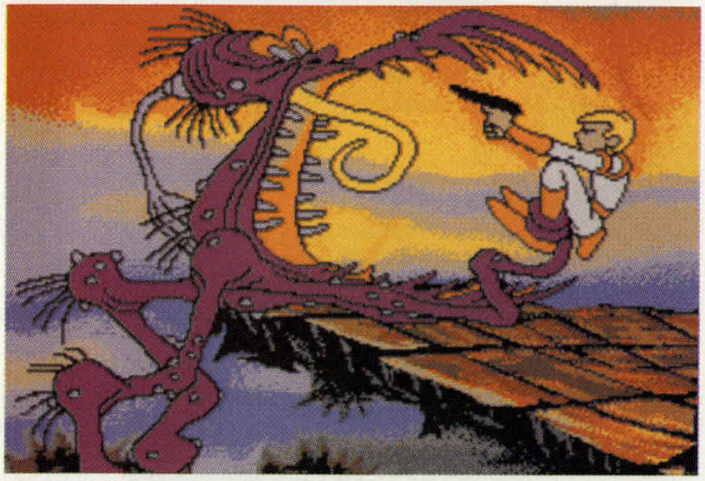
7 - THE FALLING PLATFORM



Move RIGHT to jump on to the platform, and then press RIGHT immediately, to jump off safely.

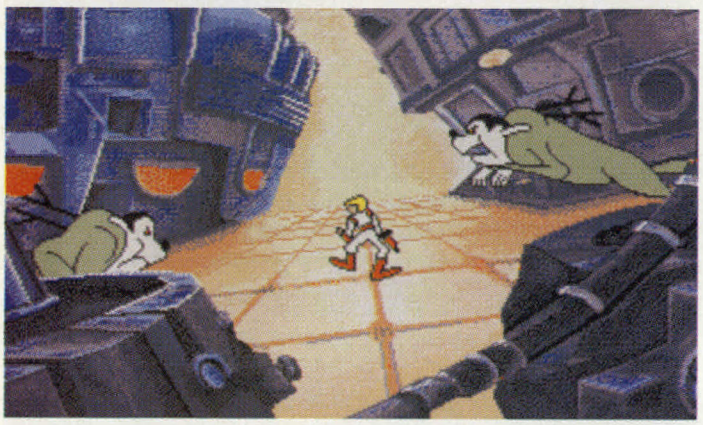
GTGA: SPACE ACE

8 + 9 + 10 - ATTACK OF THE PURPLE MONSTERS



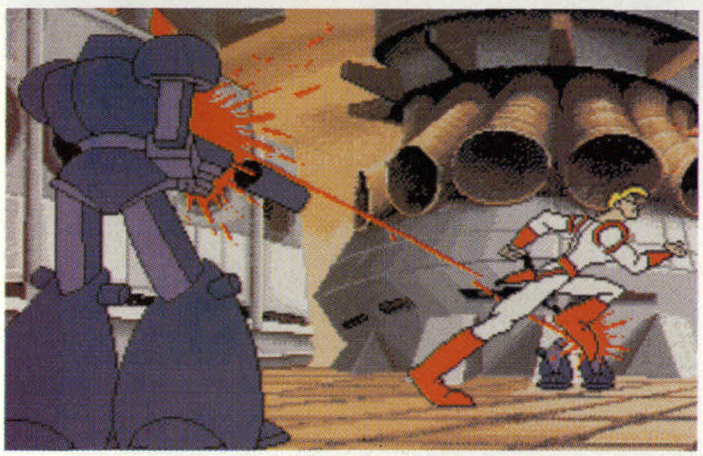
As Ace walks towards the purple monster, pull DOWN. Then push RIGHT to run through its gaping jaws. For the next monster, pull the stick DOWN, and then LEFT; and for the next one, press FIRE when its tentacle grabs you.

11 + 12 + 13 + 14 - THE CAT AND MOUSE CHASE



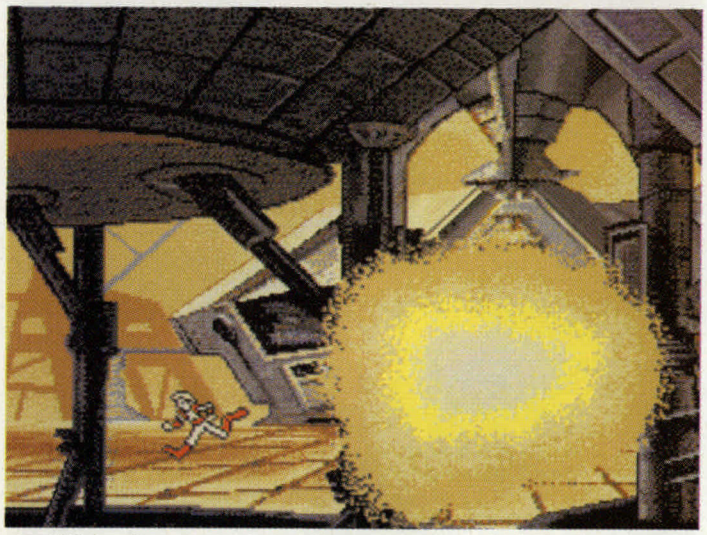
When the cat people attack, push UP. Then move UP again as soon as the two `dogs` start attacking. Then RIGHT to avoid the pursuing dogs, before finally going UP, and evading the hungry creatures.

15 - THE ROBOT SENTRIES



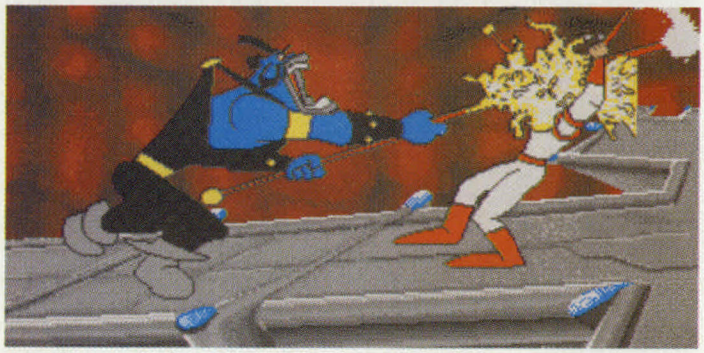
As the two robots start to come alive, press RIGHT, and watch them blow each other up!

16 + 17 + 18 + 19 - INTO THE CONTROL CENTRE



When Ace runs into the screen go LEFT. Then move LEFT again, and, finally, RIGHT to make your way to Borf`s lair. Now push the stick UP when Ace runs into the screen to climb the ladder.

20 + 21 + 22 - FIGHTING BORF



Press FIRE to block Borf`s staff just as he swings it, then press FIRE again to repeat the manoeuvre. Just after Borf appears on screen, press FIRE, followed by RIGHT to avoid the staff he swings at Ace.

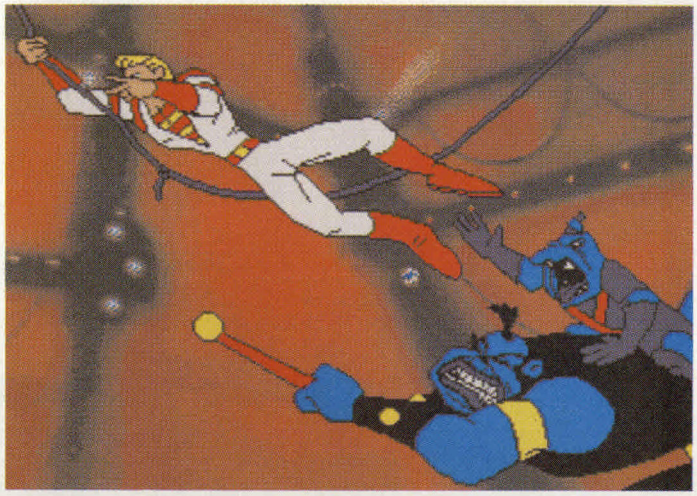
23 + 24 + 25 - RESCUING KIMBERLEY



When Ace jumps into the screen, press FIRE immediately. Then move DOWN when Kimberley shouts `Dexter`. With Ace/Dexter now on his back, press FIRE to block Borf`s attack. Borf now attacks with a melee of swings. To avoid the first one push UP, followed by a duck by pulling DOWN. Finally, go RIGHT to clear the screen.

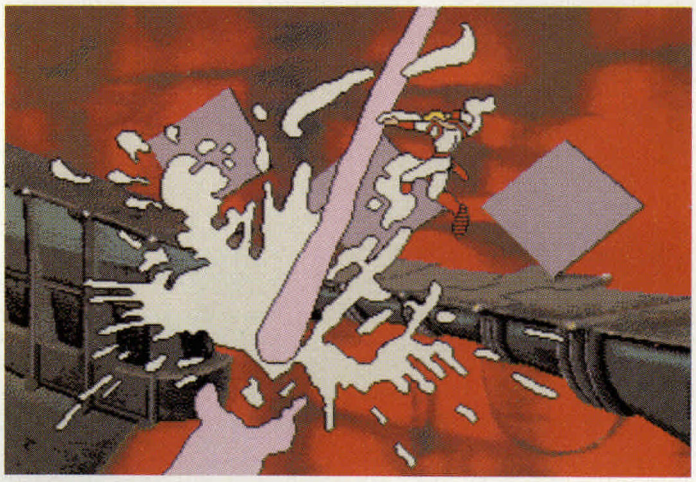
GTGA: SPACE ACE

26 + 27 + 28 - FIGHTING BACK



Move RIGHT to avoid the ever-deadly staff, then immediately pull DOWN when you are behind Borf to jump on to his back. Next, push UP to jump off Borf's back, and then go LEFT straight away. A small scene will now follow in which Kimberley will be rescued by a computer-controlled Ace.

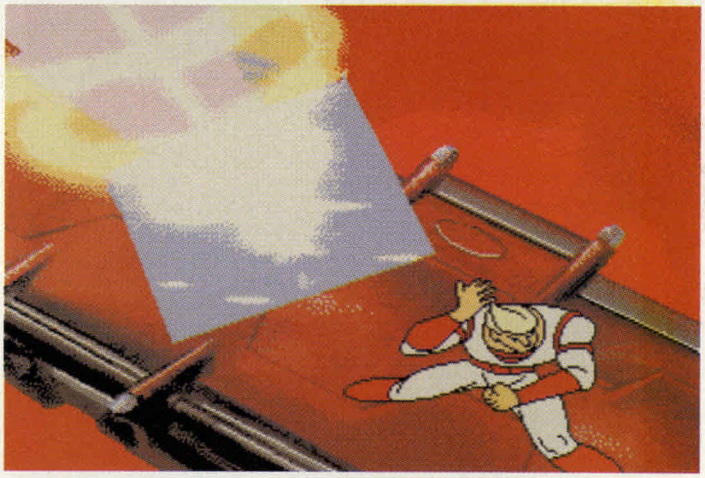
29 + 30 + 31 - ESCAPE!



When the platform dips into the lava, move RIGHT. Then RIGHT again, when Ace reaches the centre of the bridge. As our hero reaches the bridges, then go LEFT.

32 + 33 - REVENGE IS SWEET





As Ace reaches the third mirror, move RIGHT. Borf will now attack with his Infanto Ray; move LEFT to position the mirror in the path of the ray and then go straight to the RIGHT to take cover. The mirror will then reflect Borf's Infanto Ray back on himself, and you will have completed the game.



EVERYTHING YOU EVER WANTED TO KNOW ABOUT AMIGA...

GRAPHICS

Getting started in the busy profession of computer graphics can be a treacherous thing. Ian Harling offers his hand and tries to help you over the various problems you may encounter, as well as offering advice for approaching the software houses.

`How would you like`, he says with a charming, boyish smile, `to have a job where you work twelve hours a day, every day? A job that pays only four or five times a year and rarely allows time off?` (Hands are raised by a hard core of psychopaths and those with IQs equivalent to a rather dull cabbage. Some of them may actually be cabbages.) What I`ve just described is the average lot of a freelance computer graphics artist, the job that hundreds of you may be trying to get into right now. I`d like to tell you how best to present your work and some of the pitfalls you might encounter. But first, let me tell you about the glamour. There isn`t any. Really, it is just a hard slog. Seeing your work in a magazine is very nice but it adds little to the quality of life. Any fame this might bring is within a very small clique of people; and so far there is no such thing as a `graphic artist groupie`. The only time I`m affected by what is written in a computer mag is when I get slagged off by some spotty, cynical teenage git - sorry, journalist. Still, this is only because they are usually right. So, by way of helping you through the troublesome waters of computer stardom, and to, hopefully, stop you falling into the pitfalls so many do:

RULE NUMBER ONE: Don`t try to get into it for fame. All you`ll get is your ego and self-esteem reduced to shreds. So, bearing this in mind, how do you begin presenting your art to prospective employers? The content of your demo should, for most employers, be mainly animated sprite designs. Although you may have an incredible design for a 200x200 pixel combination mega-deadly nasty, stick to the most commonly used sizes of 16x16 and 32x32 pixels. Drawing interesting detailed sprites in painfully small sizes is a skill in itself; one which I am constantly learning. The hardest animation to get right is the `walk`. Without a doubt, if you do find work in the software industry, you`ll eventually have to do a walk for a game character. If you haven`t done so already, it would be best for you to develop your own walk animation as soon as possible.

Try mocking up backgrounds (in 16x16 blocks) and sprites for fictional games to include in the demo. Provide a high-score font and even a control panel or two. The reason for this is that these are things that you will be repeatedly asked to draw. Word align your sprites: ie. place the left most edge of each sprite on `word boundaries`, imaginary lines running verticlly at pixels 0,8,16,24,32 etc. This is how they would normally be presented the programmer for use. Only include up to four of your best static pictures. Although you might have lots of others, software companies will be interested mostly in what you can do within a game, not just loading screens. Once you have prepared this demo, add a concise letter stating your age, experience, computers used and whether you are interested in working in-house or freelance. Most importantly, keep it short - software houses have very short attention spans!

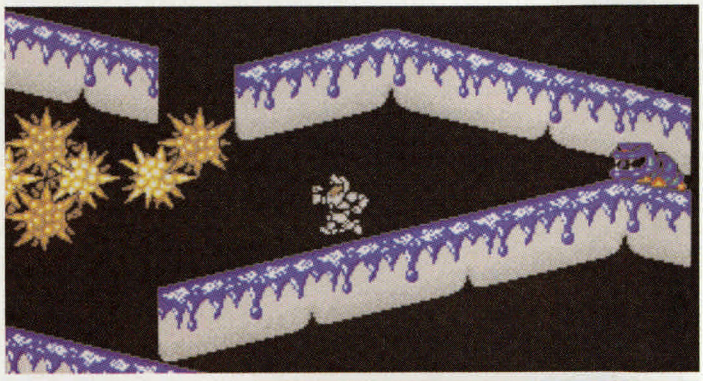
OK, now just supposing that one day you get `THE CALL`. They like your work and want you to submit a price for working freelance on their new game. What kind of payment should you ask for? This, of course, is dependent on how big the game is and how long it`s going to take.

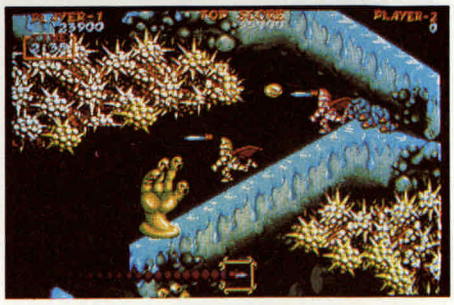


On average, a freelancer may get an advance of between four and eight thousand pounds a game, but if it is a budget title with only limited graphics, you may only get half of that. Even if you are only just starting, you should still ask for the correct rate of pay to cover your time, especially if the game is the only work you are doing each day. A minimum of about one hundred and sixty quid a week is about right for your first game, and this will climb steadily as you gain experience. Remember, though, that as a self-employed person, you must put a little aside for your tax and national insurace - boring and dull to deal with, but important nonetheless. In addition, you may even receive royalties from a finished game. These again vary, but you may get around 15% of the trade price of a game. But this can be split between you and the programmer if he, too, is freelancing. Money aside, a



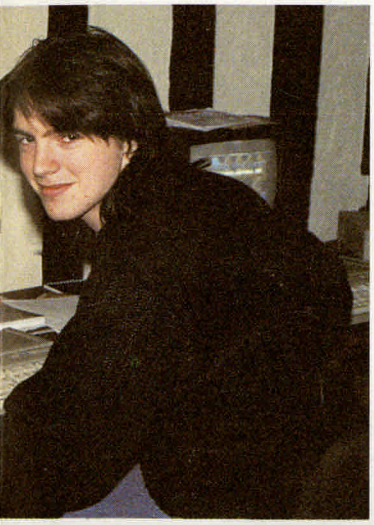
Steve Bak, programmer of countless games for the Dragon 32/64s, Commodore 64, STs and Amigas, has been through the rocky process of being ripped off, and is currently still owed money for work he produced years ago. It just goes to show that even well-established people get ripped off, too.





The graphics artist's job can be made easier during coin-op conversions if the company supply details of the game's sprites. As an example, Capcom's helped Software Creations get Ghouls and Ghosts much closer to those of the coin-op than by redrawing them.

Graftgold`s, Mike Field, broke all of Ian`s rules when he sent a disk in to Steve Turner in reply to an ad in the local paper. Mike sent in a disk of static HAM pics, which impressed Steve and Co.



software company is going to need to know how long a job will take. It`s very important that you give an accurate, realistic estimate. Don`t give an early time for completion just to get work. If you do this, your work will suffer, as will your brain, and if you fail to meet your daft deadline, you may not get any further work from the company.

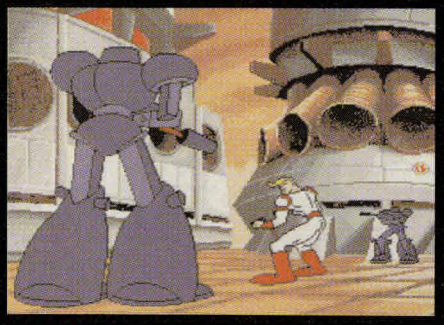
RULE NUMBER TWO: Now for the bit a lot of development houses will hate me for. Almost everyone who works in the industry can tell horror stories about being ripped off by one software company or another. Payments take months to arrive or not at all. Projects are abandoned. Company bosses do runners with games and put your work out under somebody else`s name. There is little you can do under certain circumstances, apart from entering into lengthy court battles. But, supposing you are three months into their game and your intermediate payment is long overdue? Stop work immediately. You will have doubtless called the company once or twice and asked timidly about the money you were promised. Now it is time to get back on the phone and ask nicely but firmly for it and state that, unless you get paid, not another sprite will walk. If they are rogues, they`ll dump you (but you`ll be better off out of it, anyway), but if they are a proper businesslike company, they will go very red, apologise profusely and rectify the problem. Finally, as a safeguard, always get a detailed contract before you start on the work. The points mentioned in part two may seem harsh and it is fair to say that rip-off merchants aren`t as common as they were when everyone with a Spectrum started up a software house - but it is better safe than sorry.

The Future of Game Graphics

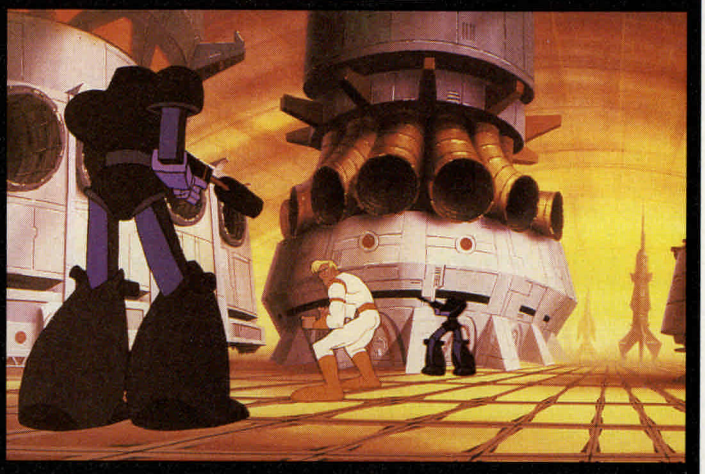
After two years in the games industry, I should soon, with a little bit of luck, be made redundant. Not that it hasn`t been fun. I love drawing, and the challenges and stresses of doing things like the Lost Patrol has opened to me all the untold joys of sleepless nights and `purely medicinal` vodka binges. But new things are about to happen to games software. New technology which will take games beyond what a mere mortal could portray with his or her DPaint III.

You see, we know that sometime in the near future home computers may have 32-bit processors, high definition monitors, and CD player drives as standard. Vastly expanded memories and increased speeds will also happen as a matter of course. But once that has brought military-standard flight sims and arcade-quality games, how long will it be before people tire of the advancements? There can only be so many Hard Drivins` or Galaxy Forces before players want higher quality again. So what could replace or compete with computer games as we know them?

Without doubt, unless we take to controlling real spacefighters with our Amigas, interactive films are the closest we could ever take the player to being there. Of course, CDI games, such as Space Ace and Mach 3, became available years ago; but they tend to have very linear gameplay and annoying pauses whilst the laser disk is accessed. But supposing each new computer had two CDI drives with enough storage space for millions of bytes of stored graphics? The new CDI software which could then be developed would allow completely interactive movies that had almost limitless possibilities with each game. Using a mixture of live action and special effects, all backgrounds and sprite-men or monsters could be taken from film stock. Real buildings, real people - what could be better?

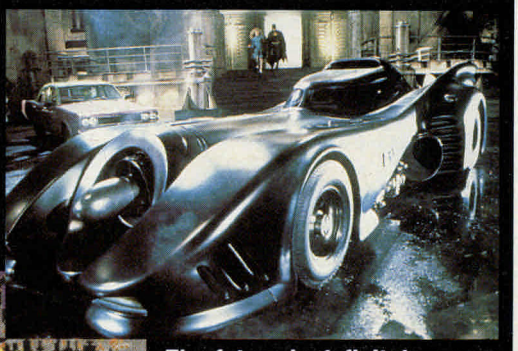


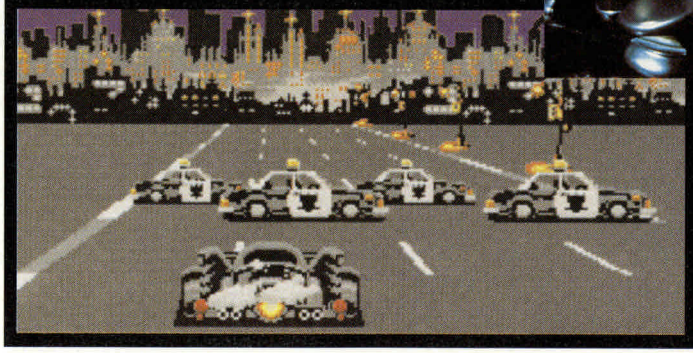
The gap between laser disk and the home computer is closing all the time, as seen in Space Ace and Dragon`s Lair. Both have taken the biggest step to emulating their arcade counterparts. With the exception of a few screens and rougher graphics, the conversion of Space Ace was almost spot-on.



Software development houses would be more like film studios, needing writers, actors and cameramen, and able to produce a vast variety of games. Though war, horror and adventure might still be prevalent, these new games would be much richer and more involving. Even educational software would benefit - instead of reading about the pyramids from stuffy old books, you could do the next best thing and wander through them. A much better and fun way to learn, methinks. The boundaries are endless: imagine an adventure game set in a real castle with the joystick moving you through the dark building. Every room could be searched in minute detail, and your actions would be governed by the factors in real life. Likewise, how about a game where you are a New York cop as he searches a derelict building for a crazed and armed psychopath. As the cop made his way around, the view could cut to the killer as he makes his way towards him. The atmosphere generated would be unreal!

All of this is possible with CDI. All it needs is the new generation of computers to bring it to your living room. And when it does, games will never be the same again. And my career? Well, because I feel that we`re so close to all this happening, I won`t give away all my ideas, just in case I get an opportunity to use them. But if I don`t, I`ll be just as happy to stay at home playing the kind of games I have always dreamed of.





The future is definitely a rosy one. We were all amazed by what a good job Ocean did with the Batman movie tie-in, but just imagine what they could do if they could use the action scenes from the film and incorporate the characters and situations into a game - now that would be THE state-of-the-art game!



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READER GALLERY

Well, we asked for a few more piccys, and we certainly got them! This month, the standard of your work is incredibly high, and I was impressed by practically everything I saw (with the exception of the one someone sent in with a crap picture of a house with `Mi Howse` written above it!). Keep `em coming, and I`ll see you next month.
Steve Merrett, Reader`s Gallery, Amiga Action, Interactive Publishing, Latham House, Quarry Lane, Chichester, West Sussex, PO19 2NY





(Above, above right & below) Winner of this month`s prize is John Chappell from Milton Keynes. His three DPaint piccys ranged from The Dark Knight, which has been copied from the artwork of Ocean`s Batman: The Caped Crusader game, and touched up a bit, to Dream, which is, I think, an original piece. Also shown is Mack the Knife.





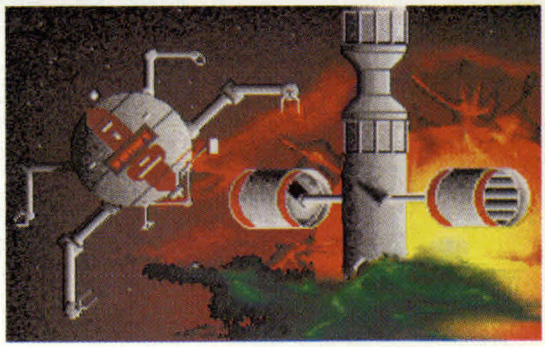
Obviously an Iron Maiden fan, Stewart Carey has sent in his pixelised version of the boy`s Can I Play With Madness artwork, featuring the ever-decomposing Eddie.



Boy, drawn in DPaint by Matthew Lockyar from Letchworth, looks as if it has been copied from a game`s box, but which one, I can`t quite remember.



(Above & right) Finally, we close with two HAM images by Chris Manning from Norwich. Of the many he sent in, I liked Evil the most, but his space piccy, titled Cupus, was neat, too.



THE EDGE £19.95

SNOOPY

Charles M. Schulz`s favourite beagle, Snoopy, is forty years old this year. So, by way of a celebration, The Edge have released this arcade/adventure featuring Charlie Brown`s main antagonist and the many other characters in the Peanuts gang. As with The Edge`s earlier cartoon licences based on Jim Davis` Garfield, Snoopy is an arcade/adventure featuring cartoon-style graphics, and involves solving a trail of object-related puzzles.

Sally`s little brother, Linus, has had his precious security blanket stolen, and is likely to break down unless he gets it back soon. There are several suspects as to who could have stolen the moth-eaten rag, but there isn`t enough evidence to convict someone of the beastly crime. Controlling Snoopy, you must take up the case, and wander around the many flick-screen locations, gathering objects and solving puzzles, until you can eventually locate and return the blanket to Linus - however, time is of the essence, and unless Linus gets his blanket within forty-five minutes, he will surely collapse of a broken heart. Your adventures will see you pottering all over the small town where the gang live, and the game features all of the gang members - Lucy, Sally, Peppermint Patty, and Marcie - in cameo roles. Snoopy is controlled using the joystick, and the directional controls allow him to move freely through the screens and he can also pick up and drop useful objects. In addition, pressing the firebutton prompts our canine hero to energetically leap in the air, whilst a quick press of the space bar sends him scuttling `into` the screen to key locations.

STEVE

The main fault with Snoopy, is that it is too similar to The Edge`s earlier hit, Garfield, and thus the same criticisms apply. Snoopy can only hold one object at a time, and this means that a lot of walking to and fro is required. However, walking between each screen is a very slow process, and considering how much is needed, the novelty soon wears off only to be replaced by frustration. If this fault had been changed, Snoopy would have been a very nice arcade/ adventure; as it stands it comes over as a sadly flawed game.

GRAPHICS

No complaints here. The characters are instantly recognisable and colour is used boldly and effectively. It's just a pity that Charlie Brown and the gang weren`t animated.

56%

SOUND

A choice between a jolly tune or spot effects during the game, neither are particularly good.

45%

DOUG

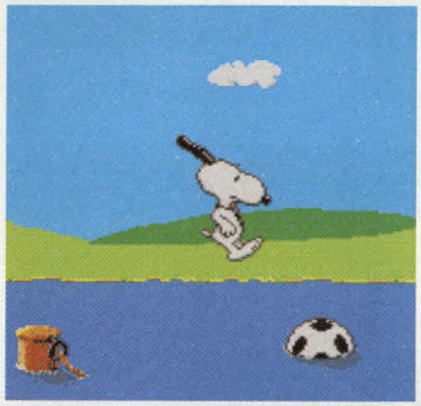
Although I didn`t like the Garfield game much, Snoopy seemed to have something that kept me playing and trying to work out the cunning puzzles. The game doesn`t prove to be very hard and, although Snoopy is enjoyable, I can see the Lasting Appeal of the game not being that long. A nice game, but not quite worth the asking price.

OVERALL RATING

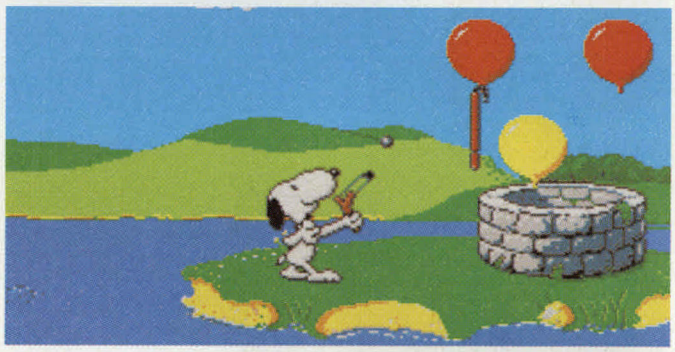
61%

Once you have collected an object, you must then take it to where you think it will be needed and press fire to activate it - as seen here, with Snoopy passing through a mini-thunderstorm without getting struck by lightning thanks to his `brolly.

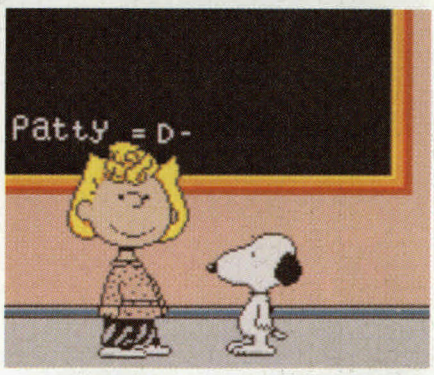




(Left & below) Snoopy cannot swim, and he will lose valuable time if he lands in the water. However, by using the bobbing flotsam as stepping stones he can get halfway across the river. Now, if only he could find a useful floating object to bridge that large gap (a ball, perhaps?), he may be able to reach the wishing well on the other side.



Most of the Peanuts gang are in the game: Lucy, Schroeder, and Peppermint Patty. They aren`t particularly helpful, but Charlie Brown`s sister, Lucy, seems to have a blue rag sticking out of her locker - could she have stolen the blanket because Linus spurned her amorous advances?





Unlike other arcade/adventures, Snoopy actually carries the objects around with him, whereas other games allow you to store them away. Our eager beagle can only hold one object at a time, so a lot of strategic thinking is needed.

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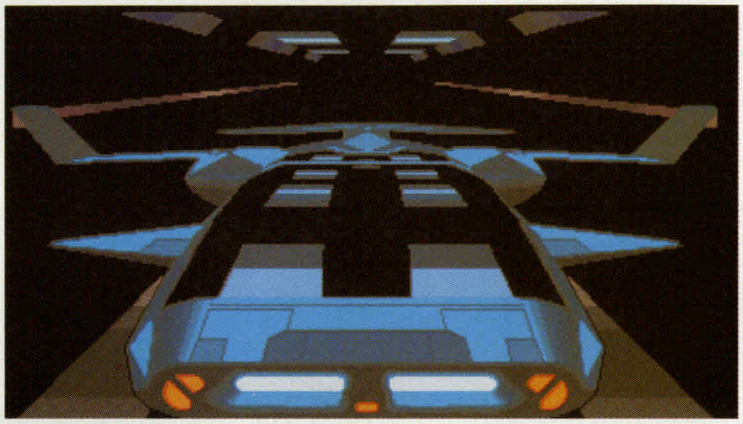
STRYX

Stryx is another in a long line of recent titles from Psygnosis/Psyclapse, and includes features that resemble their past efforts like Obliterator. The game is based around a half man, half robot killing machine, otherwise known as the almighty Stryx. You are Stryx, and you are assigned to the toughest job you are ever going to have (sounds familiar, doesn't it?). The generation of robots has decided to revolt, and are therefore using the weaponry created for them against the humans. What with revolting robots and metallic mayhem, it's a good job you remembered to pack your best suit of armour.

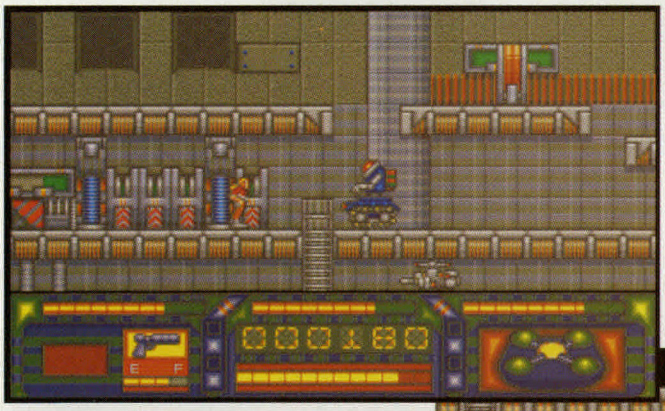
By using the joystick and keyboard, you guide our hero around the domes (cities) eliminating the enemy when you see them, but if you are weaponless, you'll just have to get in close and whack 'em. There are objects to pick up along the way, such as hand grenades, and these can all be used to your advantage. By using access cards you can open doors, one of which enables you to jump into a mining craft. This section is very much like Thrust, and needs simple joystick control to master. There are objects like the jetbike and the jetpack for you to use, allowing you to fly around the realm. There are four domes in total. all linked to a larger, central one. Each dome is divided into two: the city on top, and the mining hive below. Crystals are found below but, once again, cyborgs greet you with anger. All this goes to make up Stryx, as well as an intro that uses 1000K!

OVERALL RATING

60%

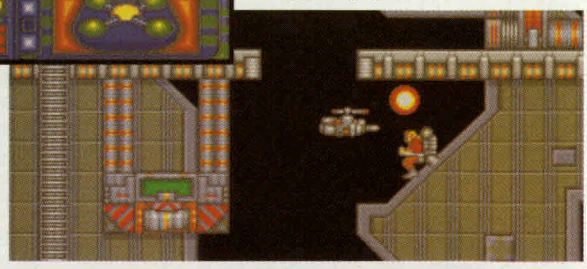


An intro lasting well over a minute lets you see the graphical excellence that is about to come, or does it?



You are the product of technical geniuses, combining the brawn of a robot with the mind of a human. Otherwise known as Stryx, you must negotiate the maze of platforms and tunnels that make up dome city.

(Below) The floor may look harmless, but the green surface gradually chips away at your energy. A jet pack is nearby, allowing you to fly over the ghastly ground.





This robot is far from welcoming and enjoys playing catch with past adventurers` skulls!



Under each city lies a hive which holds a wealth of energy crystals. By jumping into your mining craft, you can extract the gems in order to power your equipment.

ALEX

Psygnosis/Psyclapse have been known to produce brilliant titles like Blood Money but, of late, their standards seemed to have dropped. Stryx looks as if it were meant to run on an 8-bit machine and looks very poor against other platform adventures such as Switchblade. With the standard of games as high as they are today, Stryx looks far too dated and, sadly, fails to impress.

STEVE

Having seen the graphics on past Psygnosis games, such as Blood Money, Menace and, obviously, Shadow Of The Beast, the tiny sprites and gaudy backdrops of Stryx come as a great disappointment. They say `graphics maketh not a game`, but in Stryx`s case the gameplay doesn`t come to the rescue. Although the stages are different enough, the action is frustrating and tedious, leaving the impressive intro the game`s only redeeming feature.

SOUND

Theme tune produced to a high standard. The sound effects are weak but add to the action.

55%

GRAPHICS

Small sprites that run smoothly across the screen. Nice animation but poor use of colour.

50%

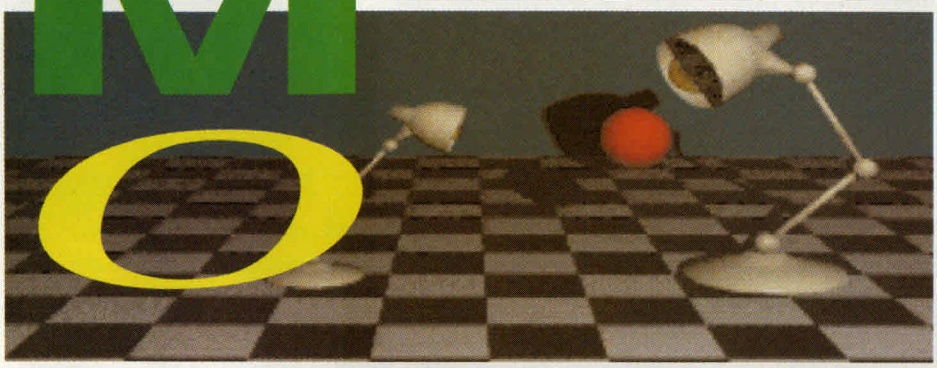
DEMO

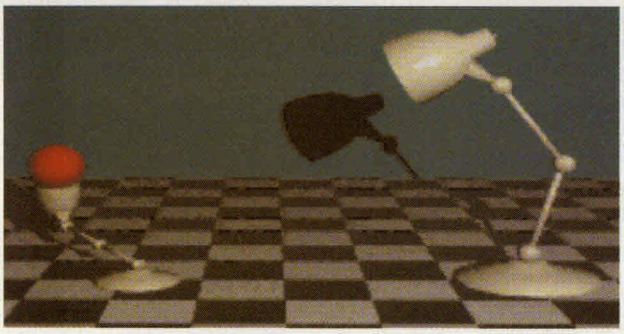




Welcome to another quick visit to the realms of demo land. If you have got an impressive demo, whether it is a slideshow of neat pics or a truly awe-inspiring combination of every talent you have, let us see it.

(Above & above right) Probably the highlight of The Mighty Druids` eleventh demo is the remix of Double Trouble and the Rebel MC`s utterly brilliant, Street Tuff (my fave rave at the time of writing). Using key samples from the track and the pulsing beat, it accompanies a neat selection of graphical effects and oddities - well worth tracking down. Also present on the disk are the Judge Dredd piece from a month or so back and the Road To Hell demo shown here, which features a nice use of colours and the palette.

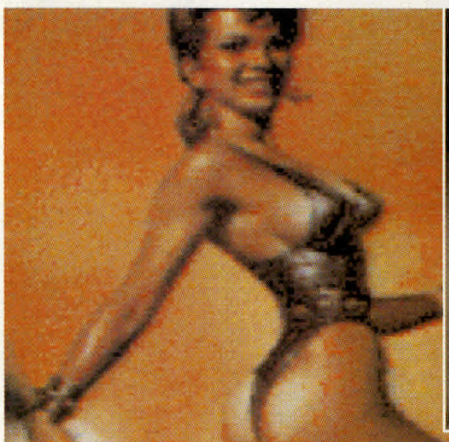




(Above & right) A `tribute` (sorry, a rip-off) of another demo, these two lamps indulge in a pleasant ray-traced game of football. The smaller one shows the most skills, but is severely rebuked by the larger lamp for getting carried away - surreal or what!

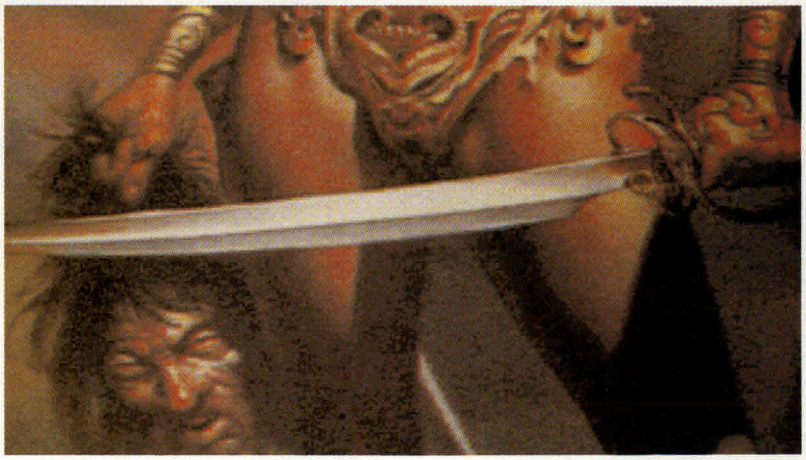


After last month`s Kylie extravaganza, this month`s taste returns to demo corner with this slideshow featuring a number of digitised piccies of Marilyn Monroe. There are over a dozen colour and monochrome piccys in the demo. Original it ain`t, stunning she is.









(Above & right) This tyle of art proves very popular on the demo scene, and this scrolling slideshow features the work of someone who Doug thinks is called Boris Velejo (he thinks that`s how you spell it!). The pictures have been digitised and although some of the colours look a bit wishy-washy, they are nice to look at.

DIGITAL MAGIC £19.95

DRIVIN' FORCE

With race games, such as Super Hang-on and Turbo Outrun, hogging the limelight for so long, newcomer, Digital Magic`s, Drivin` Force is hoping to out-do the aforementioned by allowing the player the choice of which vehicle he wishes to whizz around a number of courses on! The basic aim of the game is to beat the pack and attempt to be the first past the finishing line. This means that there is only one rule: whatever you do, do it fast - and to help you, six nippy vehicles are supplied. On offer, are trucks, Formula One racing cars, motorcross bikes, buggies, and a car looking very similar to the one in Outrun - even down to the girl in the passenger seat! In addition, whilst on the selection screen, you can choose your nationality, the method of control, and the style of competition in which you wish to participate.

There are four major competitions in all: a knockout, in which you must ensure that you are amongst the first four past the post to qualify to the next heat; and a league, where you are given bonuses depending on your final positioning - with the highest marks obviously going to those with the fastest times. These two competitions only allow you to compete in a certain vehicle, but are complemented by both a mini-league and a mini-knockout, where the same rules apply only to a lesser extent, and the mini-knockout allows you to choose your vehicle.

GRAPHICS

The graphics are only effective due to the speed. But the overall look of the track is messy, and there is very little animation on the main sprites, giving the game a bland look.

58%

SOUND

A racey tune accompanies the race action, or can be replaced by spot effects. Of the two, the music is by far the more recommendable.

53%

DOUG

When I saw the back of the box I thought the game can`t be as good as it looks, and when I played it I realized I was right. Although the graphics are pretty good, the game is really boring and totally unrealistic. As racing games go, Drivin` Force is certainly not the best and not something I`d recommend.

STEVE

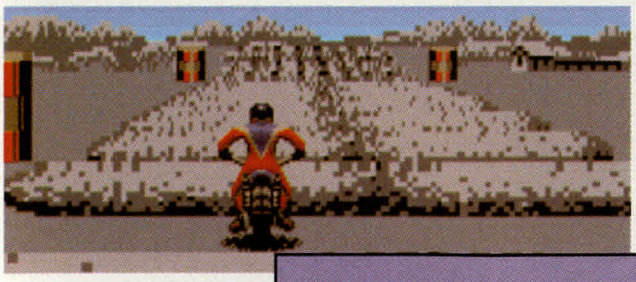
I can`t say that I`m particularly impressed with Drivin` Force. It had all the promise of the perfect race game: 50 frames per second update, and a wide selection of tracks and vehicles; but, somehow, something has been lost. It`s not particularly playable, even though it is admittedly fast, and the graphic update on the track is messy and the sprites are dull and barely animated. Not the worst race game I have played, but nearly.



From this main menu screen, you can choose your nationality, the style of competition you wish to enter, and your vehicle. In addition, you can also choose between mouse or joystick control.



Each race is played over three laps, with your basic aim being to be the first past the line. Each of the competitions sets you a different goal, but the basic rule is to tear around the course as quickly as possible.







(Above & left) Weather conditions have been added as an extra hazard, and racing in the snow can see your vehicle careering all over the road. Likewise, road-side dangers, such as houses and trees, cost you valuable time if you come off the road and bump into them.

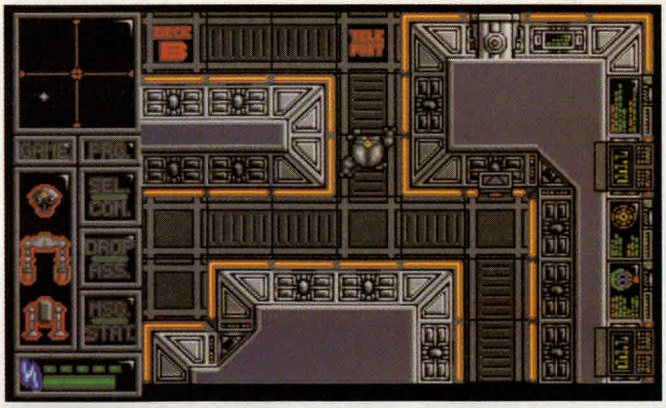
Your positioning is shown at the top of the screen, with your nationality flag gradually creeping up to the leader`s position. All in all, there are eight computer-controlled opponents, none of which really pose any challenge.

OVERALL RATING

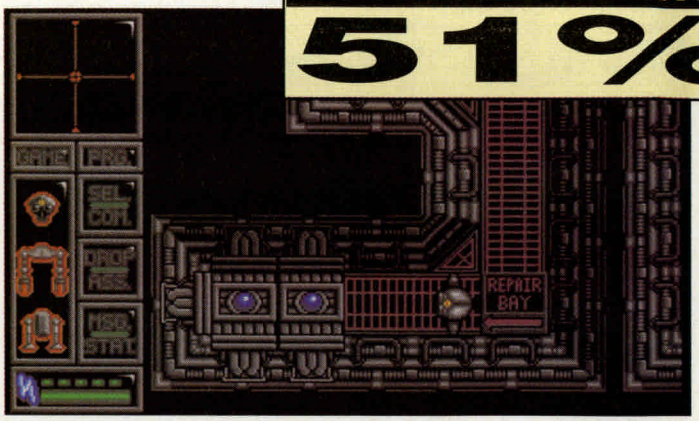
47%

OVERALL RATING

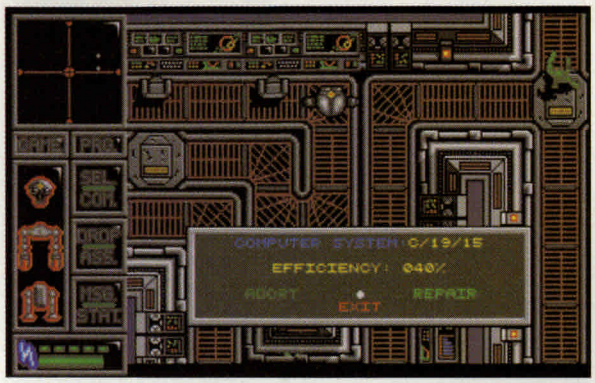
51%



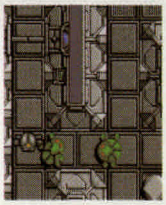
After making your way through the labyrinth of corridors within the complex, you eventually manage to combine all three parts of your driod and start the repairs to the ship.



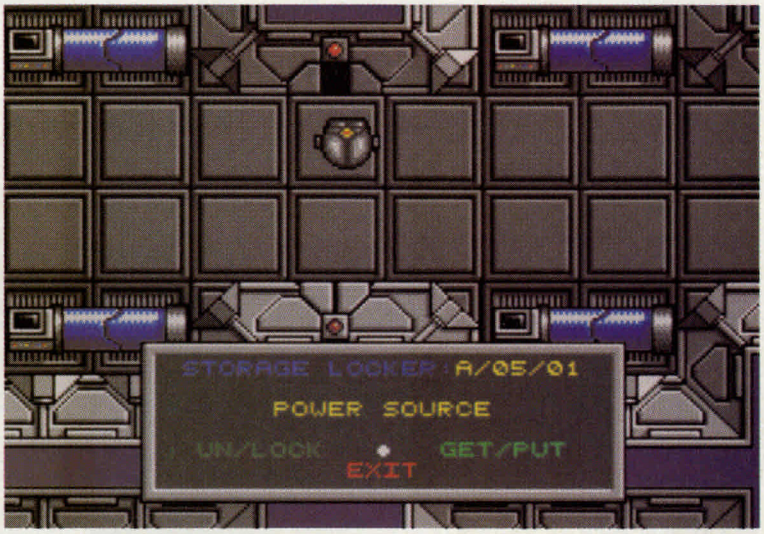
Those aliens certainly know how to do a bit of damage; but if the going gets tough, then turn tail and head for the repair bay and stock up on that precious energy.



Scouting around the complex, you find the various machines that need repairing. You`ll need to know your way around if you`re to get to them in time.



(Right) The aliens can really get on your nerves, but once you get the blast doors closed you should be OK: for now you`ll just have to blow them away.



There are plenty of lockers to search, and not much to find. The access cards are what you need, but finding them is a rare pleasure.

FIREBIRD £24.95

FIRST CONTACT

You start with your maintenance driod separated into three different parts: the head, body and legs. Each part can move independently to the other, but they can all be brought together and combined to make a much more powerful robot that can withstand a lot more damage, and do more damage at the same time. The horde of aliens are everywhere, and every now and then one of them pops to one of the ship`s computer terminals and sabotages. Once sabotaged the terminal`s efficiency will progressively go down until it reaches 0% and stops working; you have until then to find and repair it. Most of the aliens will ignore you as they make their way around the ship, but sometimes one of them will attack you and, when they do, it`s best to kill and get out of there, or more aliens who heard the laser fire will come and aid their friend.

Repairing the ship is all very well but it doesn`t solve the problem of the aliens, so what can you do to stop these inferior intruders? Blast doors are positioned at various intervals around the complex, and with the aid of the right access cards you can close and lock the blast doors one by one, thus preventing the disruptive aliens from getting in and tampering with the terminals; but first you have to find the access cards. Lockers are set into the walls of the complex, and a selection (including the access cards) of items can be found if you search the right ones, but can you lock the doors in time?

DOUG

First Contact didn`t appeal to me at first, but after a while the game starts to get a little bit more addictive - but not much. Walking around the maze of corridors, stopping every now and then to open a locker or zap an alien, can be very boring. Although the game seems to have a certain appeal to it, it`s not a game I would play for very long.

STEVE

Although First Contact offers deeper gameplay than the screenshots may show, it tends to get a bit repetitive. Wandering around the decks, opening lockers and frying green nasties can only be fun for a while, and I soon got tired with the whole process. Perhaps if there weren`t so many lockers to peek in, it would have been more exciting.I don`t think I`ll be going back to First Contact too often.

GRAPHICS

Nothing special. The colours aren`t exactly inspiring, and there`s not a lot of variety to the game. A lot more could have been done in this department.

46%

SOUND

Again, nothing that will make you sit up and pay attention. Just a few bangs and zaps and that`s about your lot. Combine this with the bland graphics and it`s quite distressing.

50%

OVERALL RATING

40%



Your faithful panther, the ridiculously-named Black Virgin, follows just behind you as you fight the hordes of deadly thugs. And should they start to get too much for you, he will leap up, killing the nearest hoodlum instantly.



At the end of each stage awaits a large guardian who must be hit repeatedly until he stays down. With your energy bar already depleted on the way to this guy, it is best to use your gun on him and save yourself time and energy.



John Steven is located at the end of the fifth stage, and, once the final guardian has been dealt with, all that remains is to take him back to where your mission began. However, he tends to lag behind, causing countless problems.



A number of moves are accessed via the joystick, and your agent can be made to perform high and low punches and kicks, as well as leap through the air in a flying kick Bruce Lee would have been proud of.



You begin the game with a full clip of six bullets in your Magnum. However, should your supply get low, occasionally, dropped thugs leave extra supplies behind, and these can be collected by standing over them and pulling down on the joystick.

TITUS £19.95

WILD STREETS

By the year 1998 New York was very different from the Big Apple of the 80`s. Overrun by drug barons, the once-great city is now divided into two distinct sections: the rich side, which is owned by the dealers, and the desolate poor side. As their power grew, the barons gradually seized control of the city, and were able to bribe their way into powerful positions. As a last-ditch attempt to halt the barons` evil trade, the head of the CIA, John Steven, was sent out on a reconnaissance mission to recce the danger zones, and start up a program that would put the city back on its feet again. However, just as the mission was coming together, he was kidnapped. It took a while to gather the information as to who had taken the agent, but with everything in order, a lone agent had been despatched to recue him.

Adopting the role of the CIA man sent to rescue John Steven, you must take a walk on the wild side through the dangerous zones of the now-rotten Big Apple. However, realising that the streets are

no longer safe, you are equipped with your trusty Magnum and a black feline guardian angel - a CIA-trained panther. With this unorthodox weapon padding along behind you, you must walk through the forty-seven flick screens that comprise the game`s five levels, and battle your way through the groups of hoodlums who attack you. A number of offensive moves are at your disposal, and these are all effected by pushing the joystick in a certain direction whilst keeping the firebutton depressed. John Steven lies waiting at the end of the fifth level, and once he has been reached, you must drag him safely back through the re-inhabited levels, until you reach the place where you started.

SOUND

Digitised speech introduces the game, and a movie-style backing tune accompanies the game. Overall, quite pleasing although the spot effects

55%

DOUG

Yet again, Titus have made a game that looks totally amazing, until you see it moving. The sprites in the game are badly animated and the sound becomes very annoying. I found that all the game consisted of was walking forward, and punching every time you meet someone. Don`t even bother waiting for the useless panther - it`s useless. Not a game I can recommend.

STEVE

I`m all for a good beat`em-up, but Wild Streets falls way below my expectations. Looking superficially like Irem`s Vigilante, it suffers from a lack of easily accessible moves and poor animation. The addition of the panther as a back-up is a good one (though why it`s called Black Virgin, I`ll never know!), but it plods slowly along and doesn`t get involved in the fracas enough - a lost opportunity. If you want a scrolling beat`em-up, check out U.S. Gold`s conversion of the aforementioned Vigilante.

GRAPHICS

Pastel colours are used on the large characters, but the effect is ruined by the stilted and jerky animation.

44%

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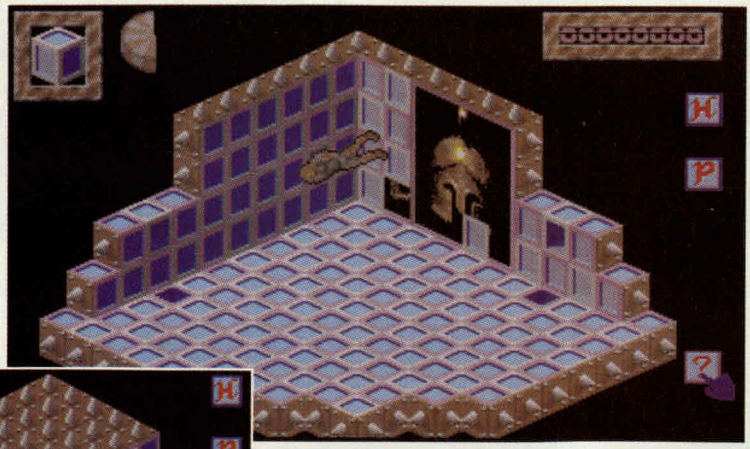
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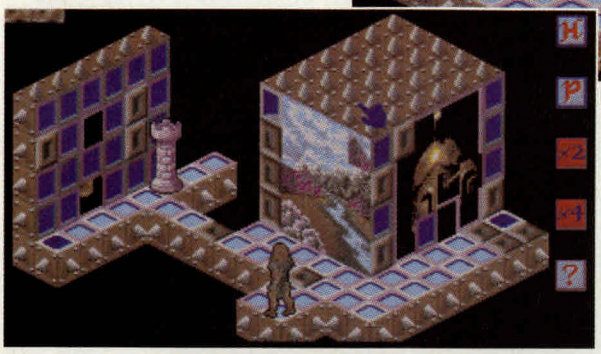
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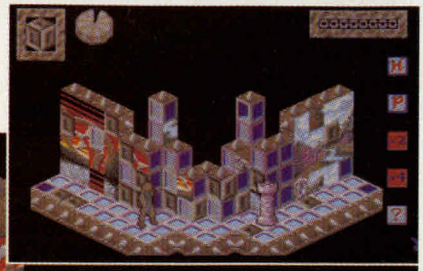
The first level is nice and easy. There's just one piece missing from the picture and none of the other pieces have been jumbled around, but things get progressively harder after this level.



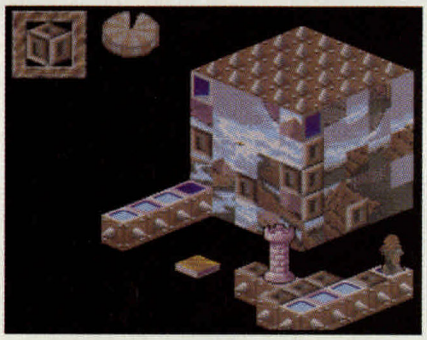
(Below) As if working out the puzzle were not hard enough, an irritating chess piece comes along and picks up a piece of the picture. Now you'll just have to wait for him to drop it again.



(Below) Unfortunately, the picture and you are separated by a void, but with the aid of that handy platform you'll be there in no time.



Without the warp tubes, life would be difficult enough, but when you, the picture pieces, and the master picture are all on a different wall, they're a life saver.



OVERALL RATING

69%

They say two heads are better than one, and when you've got two pictures to sort out, you can certainly do with that extra brain.

GREMLIN £19.99

NEVER MIND

3-D perspective games have been around for quite a while now. They made their debut on the 8-bits a few years back, mostly in the form of arcade adventures. Imagine were the people who were most renowned for these programs, and quite a series of games were brought out where you controlled a man who had to stroll around a very realistic 3-D world (well, realistic in those days); however, Psygnosis have gone one step further. Although the graphics within Never Mind are most certainly 3-D, the way your man walks around this landscape is a bit different. Each room is made up from three surfaces, at right angles to each other and, via warp tubes, you can move from one wall to another and walk around, whether you be upright or at an angle.

The object of the game is to collect various picture tiles and place them back in their appropriate place in a picture. The number of tiles that you have to collect gradually gets larger as you progress through the levels, and so does the number of pictures. Chess pieces also make an appearance in some of the later levels, and their main purpose is simply to pick up pieces of the picture and put them somewhere else; and when they start doing this on top of one of the pictures you are working on, it can be quite a pain.

Speed is another factor that you must concentrate on, for you are only allowed a certain amount of time to complete each level. Unfortunately, you only have one life and if you run out of time, it's game over. But when you get to a new level you can get access to a code by pressing the on-screen question mark, and then start from that level whenever you want.

DOUG

Puzzle games are very few and far between nowadays, but every now and then the odd one pops up with some sort of new gameplay techniques. Never Mind is one of these puzzle games, and very good it is too. No sooner have you started to play the game, you are hooked and can't put it down. Psygnosis have come up with a winner here, and if you're after something different, give this one a try.

ALEX

I found Never Mind's gameplay absorbing at the beginning, but after completing the first few levels, there is not much more there to keep you solving the puzzles. Animation on your character is average at best, but the picture tiles are well drawn and those that move are animated to a high standard. Sadly, Never Mind seems to be based around an idea with small potential, and I found it to be lacking in long-term appeal.

GRAPHICS

The way you can move around the screen has been really well thought out, and it's not until you get to some of the later stages that you realize how clever it is.

67%

SOUND

Sound isn't exactly Never Mind's strong point, but the music is adequate and gives you something to listen to while playing the game.

62%

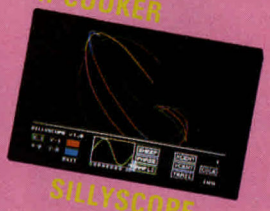
Trip-A-Tron

LIGHT SYNTHESISER


CONTROL PANEL


EVENT SEQUENCER


COLOUR COOKER


SILLYSCOPE


DISK ACCESS


STARFIELD EDIT


KML LANGUAGE

TRIP-A-TRON
converts your AMIGA
into an instrument on which you
(and your mouse) can produce flowing
patterns of light and iridescent colour, *and match the display to any music.*
THE RESULT is fascinating - pleasure enhanced by knowing that your sequences can be saved and enjoyed again or *used as performance art at a disco or by a group.*
SOON THE LIGHT-SYNTHESIST COULD BE UP THERE WITH THE GUITAR HEROES.

AMIGA TRIP-A-TRON with graphics effects allocated to most keys, is instantly useable. It also has its own programming language, KML, and beautifully designed pop-up screens, helping you create an *infinity of unique effects.*
TRIP-A-TRON comes with a comprehensive 145 page manual in an attractive A5 ring binder.

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GOLD OF THE AMERICAS

OVERALL RATING

49%

It is the 16th Century, Columbus has sailed the ocean until it`s as blue as it's ever going to get. Now it's your chance to turn it red with the blood of your rivals.

With the discovery of the Americas, the European empires of France, England, Spain and Portugal embarked on the 'Rape of the Century'. Soon, the competing nations were at each others` throats as their armies and navies sought to gain the lion`s share. This game puts you in the position of commanding your country's campaign. The three other commanders may be human opponents or computer controlled. The computer components may be selected with varying degrees of skill to give you a game as tough as you like.

The game allows you to buy and use, armies, colonists, explorers, slaves, trading ships and pirates. As with all 'Empire' games, you must establish colonies and build them up to a point where they contribute money to your coffers. This money is used to acquire more resources which subsequently allow you to expand and eventually take over your opponent`s lands. After 30 'turns' the player with the most lands and cash is the winner.

GRAPHICS

Static, comic-book pictures and maps make up the displays. Simple icons and menus are used to display your options - the staple fare of trading games. Real 'State of the Ark' stuff!

80%

SOUND

No sound to speak of apart from a jolly hornpipe introduction.

N/A

Natural and man-made disasters will arrive to turn your dreams of conquest to dust. Nations will declare war on your ships and local natives will murder your colonists if you have proved to be too much of a tyrant. Invest heavily in colonists and treat the natives kindly, or simply build up your armies to raid neighbouring countries to steal their riches - it's your choice.

SK

As soon as I saw the '$' sign in front of the cash totals I knew I was in trouble. If I remember my history right, none of the four countries depicted in this game used the dollar for its currency. This inattention to detail pervades this game which I found little joy in playing. The graphics were up to an acceptable standard and the small snatches of the national anthems were OK, but for the rest of it I couldn't have cared less whether a colony succeeded or failed, or who was at war with who.

ANDY

Understanding why the game decided that you lost three ships and five armies in the last turn can be a mystery , but it can be fun watching history changing as a result of your actions. My main criticism, though, is that no planning is required. You want five ships, or you wish an army to land five thousand miles away - no waiting is required, it all happens in the subsequent turn. A bit too basic for my liking.

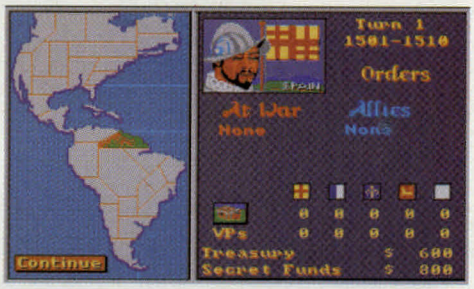
The game options permit the player to test his expertise against 3 computer opponents whose skills range from Novice to Expert.





The four competing countries gather at the starting point. Both the map of the Americas and the record book is blank. The race for power and riches is about to begin.

Your option screen gives a list of your available gold. This money is in two chests - Treasury and Secret Funds. Keep your 'slush' money away from the tax men, you will need it.





At the end of each ten-year period you will be given reports on the success and failure of your endeavours.



As you concentrate on the land-based difficulties, your ships are running the gauntlet of the sea-battles which threaten to sink all of your profits.

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Your first training session tests your skill with the simple pilgrim's staff against a knife-wielding pirate. You can of course, also choose to drop-kick him when he least suspects it.



Now is the chance to test your unarmed-combat technique. Icons representing the various moves you may use are displayed beneath the combat area where you can swiftly select them with the mouse pointer.



Your disembodied head represents your journey across the palm-tree covered islands. Ships in the harbour await you. However, think before you just take what isn't yours.



Once you have moved indoors, you can indulge in some 'head-banging' to discover objects which may be opened and rifled through for useful items.

ORIGIN SOFTWARE £24.99

WINDWALKER

Leave behind your joystick and put away your worldly goods. Moebius the Mystic has called you to fulfil your spiritual destiny on the path to inner serenity. You will travel through exotic lands of mystery and magic, converse with strange creaures - and beat the living daylights out of them! This game is the sequel to the successful MOEBIUS game of a few years ago. The game's aim is to combine the fun of arcade martial arts combat with the travel and exploration aspects of Role Playing Games. It's tough out there amongst the bamboo huts and paddy fields, so whatever you do, remember that only a 'foolish glasshopper' would travel in a land crawling with staff-wielding assassins without first sharpening his skills in the training sessions.

Training sessions permit you to battle against different foes wielding various sharp implements. Control of your character is via the mouse, in a similar way to the control of the Psygnosis Barbarian. Small icons representing the manoeuvres that your hero can carry out are placed at the bottom of the screen for you to quickly move between - forward and backward somersaults, high-kicks, various punches etc. You are also trained to fight with the aid of a holy man's staff against soldiers with swords - so much for a fair fight!

Once you select to embark on your journey, the screen will change to a scrolling map and you and the other characters are represented by disembodied heads which move in jerks around the landscape. Moving your character until he 'bumps' into an object will produce a menu allowing you take 'take' or 'use' the item. You may speak to other inhabitants about various things via menus - much like the ULTIMA games. Asking about one thing inevitably allows you to ask more questions about another, and so your knowledge builds up. Offers of help will come to you if you have been behaving yourself, so keep your thieving adventurer's hands to yourself. Food and rest must be catered for or your health will suffer.

Magic and alchemy also play a part in your quest. Chatting-up the local medicine man might give you a few recipes which you can use to keep yourself healthy, and with all the water around you'll also find that the good ole 'walking-on-water' trick comes in useful. Other useful party tricks include Levitation which gives you

SOUND

There are a few digitized grunts and groans to pep-up the action, but otherwise no great effort has been put into this aspect of the game

60%

DOUG

I don't usually worry about the graphics in a game like this, but the animation in the fighting sequences really got on my nerves, and I remember hearing music of the same standard four years ago on the C64. However, the game is quite large with a fair bit for you to do, and plenty of people to interact with. If you don't mind the poor quality of the graphics and sound, Windwalker might appeal.

ANDY

There is a large world here with loads of characters to chat to and cupboards to open and peer into. The fight sequences can be fun and no doubt with practice you'll become 'Master of the Mouse Mat', but the main graphic screen is crude and very '8-bit'. Okay, it's full of wise mystic sayings and oriental mumbo jumbo, but it's hardly machine-stretching. It's as good as any old game ever was, but I want a new one.

a brief over-view of your surroundings - very useful if you want to know who's waiting round the corner. Invisibility can also be employed to confuse your enemies and let you avoid a fight. Most important is the spell for Invulnerability which will render you immune from bodily harm.

A true follower of Moebius will conduct himself honorably at all times. Failure to behave correctly (e.g. 'pinching' food without asking) will result in loss of points and, more importantly, loss of assistance from the other inhabitants. Sooner or later some bully-boy will turn up to kick rice in your face and then even a humble disciple is allowed to defend himself and kick his teeth in. Once into 'Grunt Mode' the game will change to the combat screen and a sideways view of the action is given.

There are various temples, palaces and prisons to explore and languish in, and even more men, gods and monsters to chat-up and do battle with. Providing you first obtain permission, you may use ships to travel between the many islands (even you can't walk on water for ever) to reach the palace of the evil warlord who has imprisoned the Emperor and his beautiful daughter.

GRAPHICS

The combat sequences are realistically animated, albeit a little sluggishly; however, the 8-bit background graphics over which our hero heaves himself during his travels are less than impressive.

65%

SK

I quite like the old Chinese and Japanese martial arts stuff; I read books on it and am a fan of Bruce Lee films, but this game does nothing for me. The graphics are good, and being able to select the fight actions using the mouse to point to an icon makes a change from breaking your wrist on a joystick. However, I couldn't come to terms with the adventure side of the game. The use of a large head to depict characters I found offputting, as was the difficulty in controlling the movements of the character.

OVERALL RATING

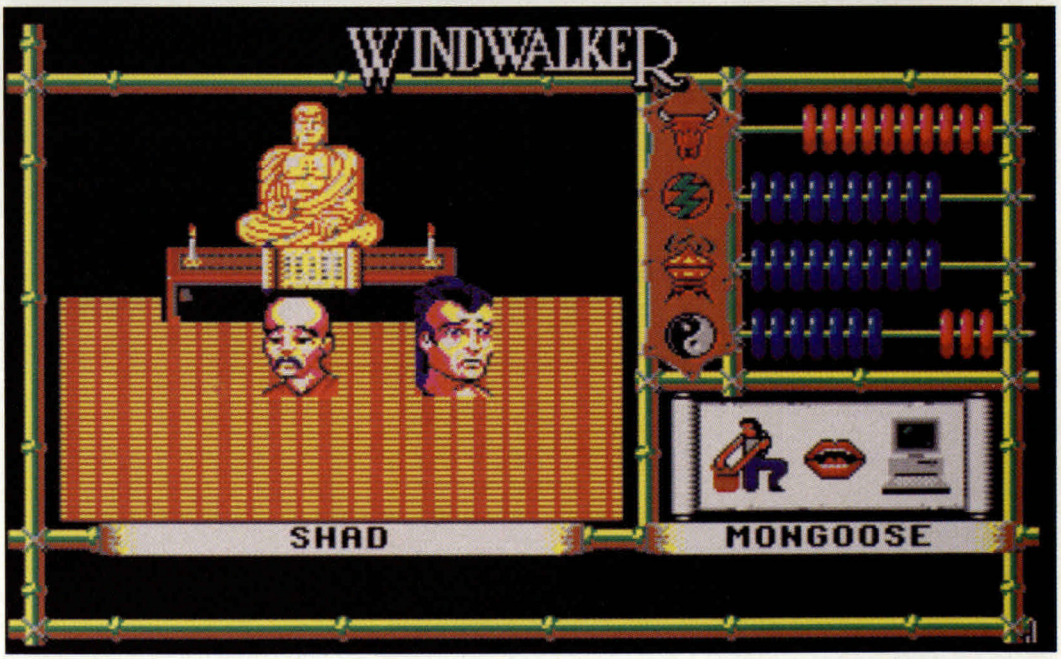
66%



Using a series of sub-menus you may chat with the locals and uncover who knows what in this neck of the paddy fields. This system of conversation is similar to that used in the Ultima games.



As you sail between the islands keep an eye on the blue abacus beads representing your bodily and spiritual health. Lack of food and sleep will soon have you running into the red.



Death isn't always the easy way out. The gods may just take a liking to you and give you rebirth in a holy temple where you can recover and have another chance.

ACCOLADE £24.95

DAY OF THE VIPER

SOUND

A few laser blasts and a small selection of other sound effects is all that is in the game, but there`s a nice piece of music on the title screen.

50%

GRAPHICS

Colour could probably have been used to greater effect, but the graphics do their job and you know what`s happening during the game.

47%

STEVE

The unusual gameplay behind Day Of The Viper made the game initially very compelling, and the urge to keep scouring the decks was quite strong. However, after a while, repeating the same procedure got quite repetitive, and I started to wish for a little more variety. Still, Day Of The Viper is a novel game which should appeal to anyone who fancies something just that little bit different.

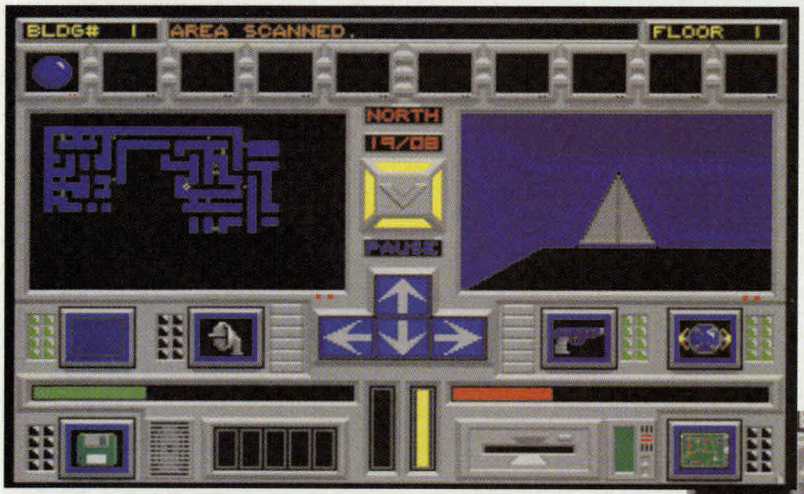
The game begins with you being sent a message from your base. Some scientific lab that has recently made some amazing breakthroughs in Laz gun technology has been assaulted and taken over by the evil GAR (Genetic Android Race). Only your Viper (an android like GAR but without the brains), under your control, can infiltrate the lab and recover the data disk back-ups of the Laz gun experiments. Unfortunately, some of the Viper`s circuits have been damaged, but with a bit of luck these can be found in the labs as you wander around.

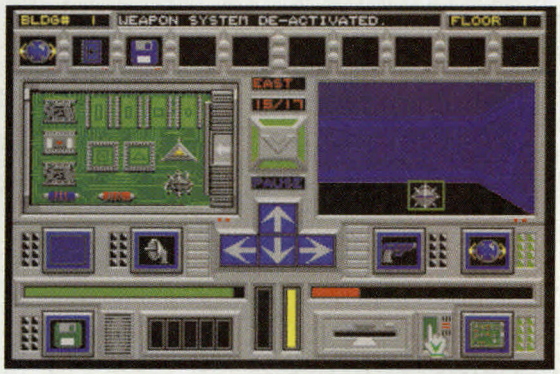
The Viper is fitted with a special mapping plotter that will store the layout of the labs in memory so that you don`t get lost, and it also has a scanner unit so that you can work out what the corridor layout of the surrounding area is. An assortment of objects can be found in the labs. Energy Crystals are the most common thing to be found and these can be to recharge your weapons and shield, but the most important item to be found are the access cards, for without these you won`t be able to enter any of the rooms within the labs. Day Of The Viper also saves everything you do so the game remembers if you leave a certain object in a certain place, and if you want, the game itself can be saved and you can continue at a later date.

DOUG

Day Of The Viper doesn`t seem to have much to get excited about; nevertheless, I found it really addictive and enjoyable to play. The game`s guidelines are basic and not exactly that original, but when it comes down to it, as far as I`m concerned, the game is fun. If you`re after something to pass your time, have a look at Day Of The Viper because it`s better than it looks.

Arriving at a door, you use your handy scanner to see if there are any objects on the other side, and thanks to the mapping plotter, your Viper can store this information for later.



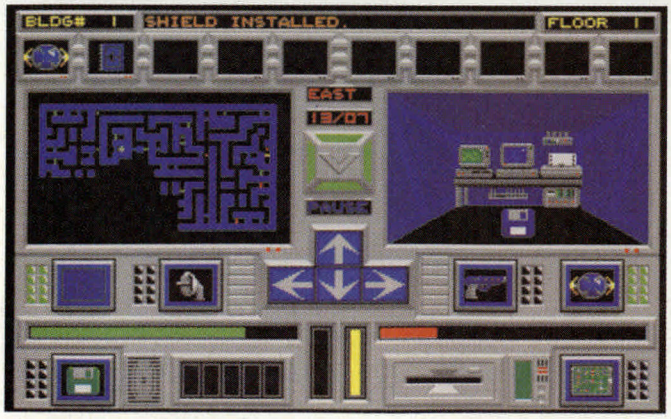


Most of the Viper`s circuitry was damaged on the way to the labs, so now you`re here, you`ll have to find chips to replace them, and you`ll need to be in total working order to get very far.

OVERALL RATING

60%

(Below) At last you find one of the access cards and manage to get past one of the security doors; but once in there, you have to find out what to do next.





Encountering psychopathic robots happens far to often for my liking, but armed with your trusty Laz gun You make short work of most of them. Let`s just hope you can keep it up.

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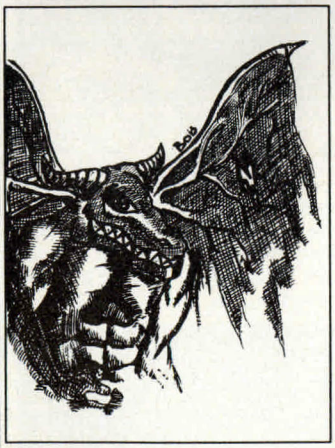
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LOST DUTCHMANS MINE

SOUND

Tunes that complement the game no end play at key points during the game, as well as some pleasant sound effects.

48%

GRAPHICS

Nicely drawn and animated graphics with some good effects: Nothing new or out of this world, though.

58%

ALEX

Magnetic Images' Lost Dutchman Mine is a brilliant game to begin with, but once all of the sub-games have been played it becomes somewhat tedious and so made me want to give up. Nice touches, such as exploring the mines, keep the game alive whilst you still keep searching, but that doesn't fully compensate for the apparent lack of variety and gameplay. A good game while it lasts - which, sadly, isn't for very long.

`Well howdy, folks! Let me tell ya 'bout a story I once heard. Ya know dem gold diggers? Well bless ma littl' ol' cotton socks, dey knew how ta' make money!` But legend has it, there was an old mine deep in them hills in Arizona. They are supposed to hold riches beyond belief. You are one of those gold-hungry prospectors that intend to locate the Lost Dutchman Mine and live the rest of your days in the lap of luxury.

Our bearded buddy starts off with nothing but a few crinkled notes in his hand, so I think it is best to equip him with objects that enable him to gain more of the stuff that makes the world go round. For instance, a pan would be helpful if you wanted to pan for gold in the river, wouldn't it? Of course it would. So off he strolls to the riverside, has a quick look around and ends up carrying a bag of gold dust. Without further ado, he enters the assay office and exchanges the ore for some cash.

A better way of making money is to enter the deserted mine-shafts and dig for gold using your trusty pick (providing you brought one, of course). The mines are somewhat mazelike and you must take care when you examine the rockface, otherwise your clumsy feet might cause a rockfall and leave you dazed. Food plays a vital part in Lost Dutchman Mine, and you can choose either to buy it from the local shop or go to the river with its abundant resources of fish.

DOUG

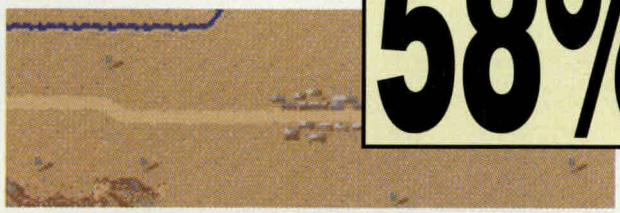
For a game that requires one Meg I was expecting a little more from Lost Dutchman Mine. There are a few sub-games to keep you occupied, but not much else, and due to this it soon becomes monotonous. This isn`t the type of game that would persuade me to upgrade my Amiga to a full Meg.

OVERALL RATING

58%



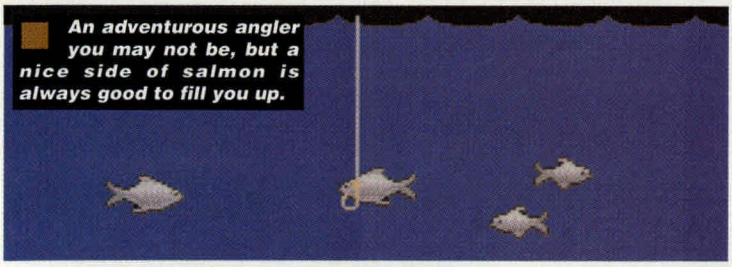
The local shops offer a wide range of equipment for our Wild-West friend, which can include anything from a revolver to shoot the rootin' tootin' bandits to a big bottle of whiskey to satisfy your gold-digging dreams!



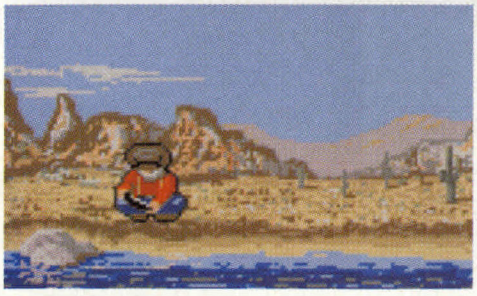
An overhead map shows a view of the surrounding area, and allows you to travel to the nearby river or maybe the distant mountain range.



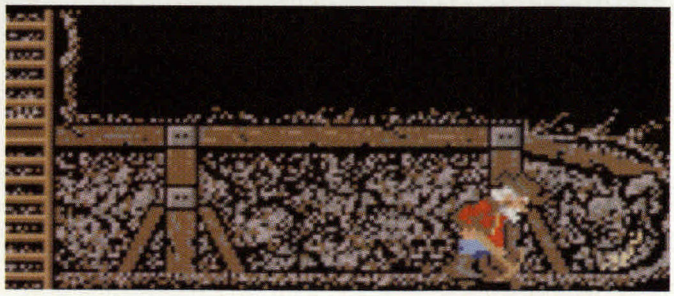
Back at the saloon, a man challenges you to a friendly game of poker. Being a dab hand at cards, you accept and wipe the floor with him. A bit more money to go into your ever-increasing bank account.



An adventurous angler you may not be, but a nice side of salmon is always good to fill you up.



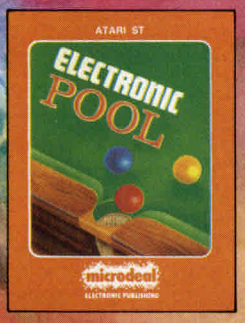
(Left & right) Money is what everybody wants, and this can be got by either panning for gold dust in the river, or digging for precious ores in the mines situated far, far away in the mountains.



ALL FOR ST OR AMIGA



GOLDRUNNER
Our top selling shoot em up from Steve Bak and Pete Lyon.



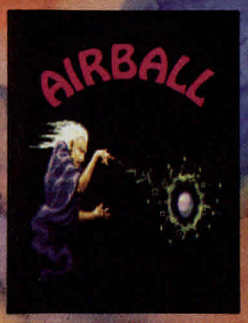
ELECTRONIC POOL
Mono or colour version of 'Video Pool' arcade game.



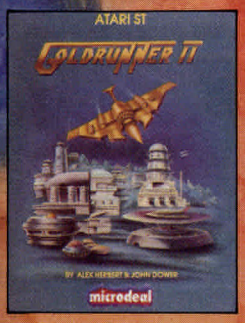
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Vertically scrolling shoot em up by Steve Bak.



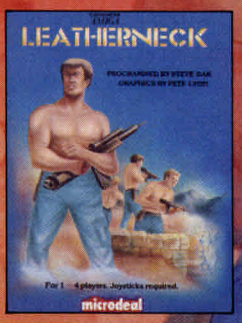
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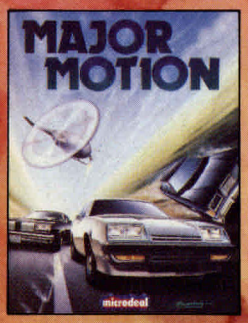
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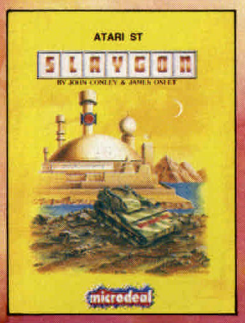
LEATHERNECK
Reviewed as the best arcade war game, program by Steve Bak.



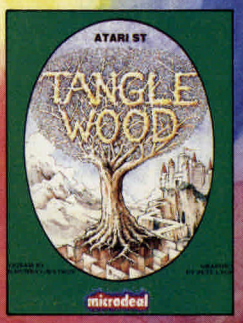
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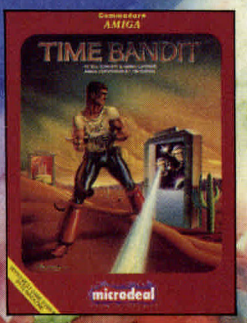
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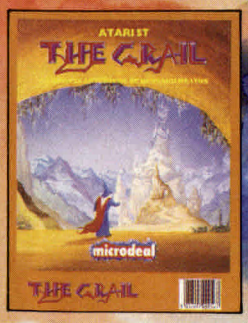
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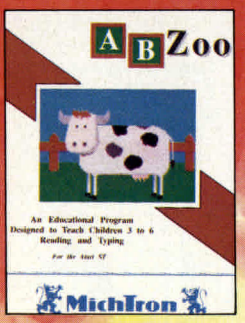
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DR DOOM'S REVENGE

Dr. Doom, the evil dictator of Latveria, has risen again, but this time the whole of New York city is at risk. With the aid of his many expendable minions, Doom has managed to acquire a Thermo C4V.G. missile, and is going to launch it at the helpless city unless the U.S. government agree to become a colony of Latveria. Captain America`s crime-fighting skills are usually only used on common criminals, but with the Fantastic Four and the Avengers already on missions, he is America`s only hope; but even he will not be able to defeat Dr. Doom alone. However, thanks to the sudden appearance of Spider Man, Captain America has a useful ally, and with his help they might just be able to pull it off.

The game starts with the heroes entering the castle of Dr. Doom. No sooner have they placed a foot inside the fortress, than they are attacked by Doom`s robot sentries. These can be overcome quite easily by the heroes, but then you meet the real test. Dr. Doom hasn`t been lazy during these last months and, in preparation for the expected assault, he has assembled a team of evil super-criminals. Keeping these baddies at bay isn`t going to be easy, but each of the heroes has his own special weapon: Captain America has his indestructible adamantium shield, and Spidey has his special spider skills and wrist webs. Both of them are used to getting some bruises, but this time it`s not just one or two opponents that they will be fighting, but a whole gang of them, with Dr. Doom as the leader. Captain America and Spider Man will have to make full use of their skills if they are to come out of this alive and save New York city in the process.

STEVE

In all my time as a games reviewer, I cannot remember seeing a game as decidedly average as this. Whilst the graphics are passable and instantly recognisable, the character animation is diabolical. Both Spidey and Captain America limp around like Quasimodo, and, coupled with scrolling an 8-bit owner would wince at, any interest sparked by the cartoon intro screens is killed. The gameplay consists of very limited fighting and jumping moves, and I reckon reading the free comic that comes with the game will last you longer than playing it.

GRAPHICS

Quite good animation in the fighting sequences, although they do seem to be a bit slow. The graphics that make the game are the story panels between stages.

46%

SOUND

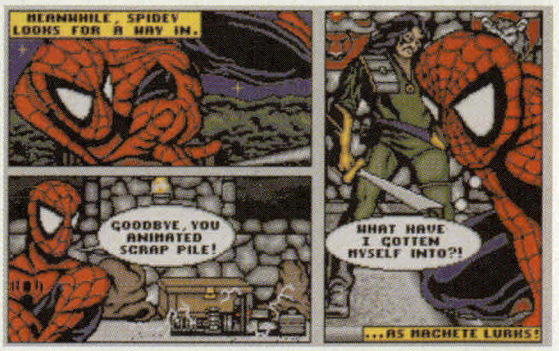
Unlike the graphics, there`s nothing really stunning, but there`s quite a few nice FX, such as Spidey`s web and the Cap`s shield noises.

50%

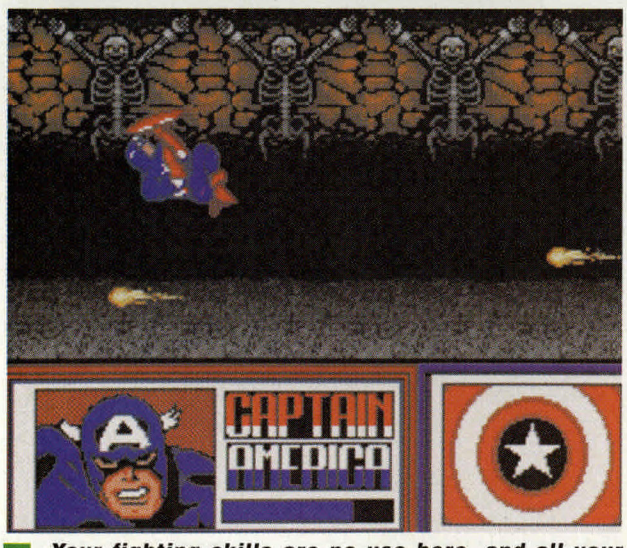
DOUG

Although Dr. Doom`s Revenge isn`t exactly a game that reaches new heights of programming, I think it`s great fun to play. Swapping between the two crime-fighters keeps your interest going and, unlike a lot of beat`em-ups, the game doesn`t get repetitive thanks to the variety of enemies and super challenges. In my opinion, Dr. Doom is a great little game.





(Left & right) Spidey bumps into a deadly Doombot, but even with the aid of his trusty webs, can he overcome this evil menace? The boxes that will give you the answer are left unfilled, and only you can decide the outcome. But, as you can see, once the robot is killed, there`s no resting.

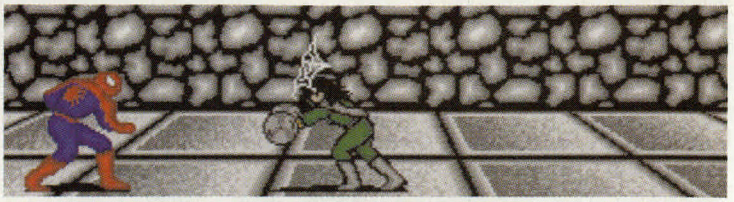


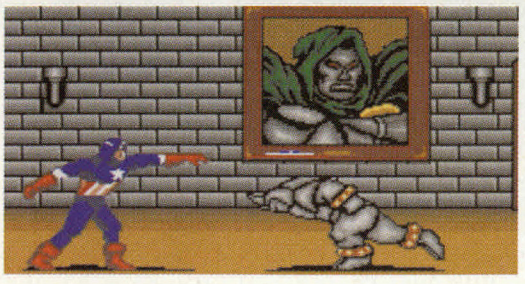
Your fighting skills are no use here, and all your concentration must be saved for defence if you`re to avoid the fireballs. However, this won`t be the last Super Challenge.

(Below) Spidey`s webs won`t last forever, but if the going does get too tough, he can jump and seek refuge on the ceiling.

OVERALL RATING

43%





As with all beat`em-ups nowadays, all the positions of the joystick are used, and a good variety of moves can be accessed. Without a doubt, throwing your shield is the most effective method.

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CABAL

Not perhaps as well known as the likes of Operation Wolf and its sequel, Operation Thunderbolt, Cabal is a shoot`em-up using the sight system made so popular by these games. However, the main difference between TAD`s little-known coin-op and the Uzi-toting Taito machines is that, whereas all the action in the Operation games was viewed through the `eyes` of the character you were playing, in Cabal your character is displayed rolling around energetically at the bottom of the screen, avoiding the continuous stream of bullets and grenades thrown at him by the enemy.

A one or two-player game, Cabal involves the said participants battling their way through five action-packed stages of enemy-filled bases. Armed with a machine gun and an unlimited supply of ammunition, the two heroes must battle their way through the four levels that comprise a stage, and defeat the massive `super-weapon` that awaits at the end of it. Along the way, countless soldiers and attacking vehicles must be offed, and your task is made slightly easier by the extra weapons that can be collected by killing or blowing up certain enemies. Another feature unique to Cabal is the ability to hide behind key sections of each screen`s landscape. As the enemy counter your attack, you can hide behind walls and barrels before they, too, are blown away. Likewise, the enemy use old buildings and trees to shelter behind, but these are easily destroyed with a few rounds of concentrated fire or a well-placed grenade.

GRAPHICS

A bit rough in places, Cabal`s graphics are fairly close to those of the original coin-op. Some of the sprite animation leaves a lot to be desired, but overall they serve their purpose.

61%

SOUND

Plenty of gun noises and explosions, which really add to the `do or die` nature of the game. In addition, the military-style tunes are the icing on the cake.

68%

STEVE

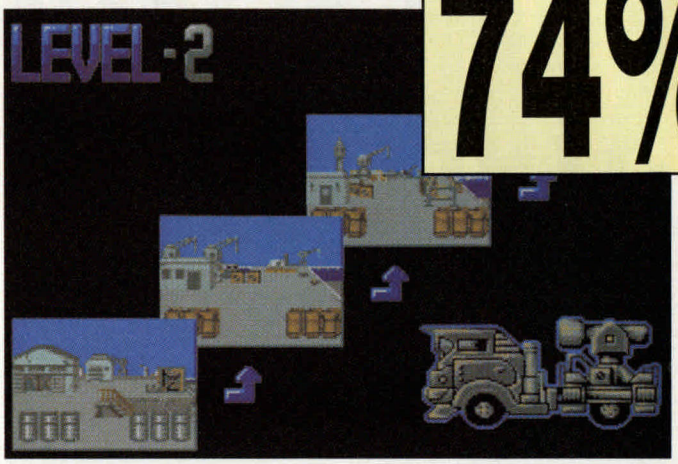
By no means up to the standard of Operation Thunderbolt or Chase HQ, Cabal is a playable little game nevertheless. It has a lot of graphical rough edges (for instance, the grounded planes in the second stage leave an unsightly tail behind when destroyed) and the graphics aren`t all they could be, but when it comes to playability, Cabal is up there with the best. I preferred the game in two-player mode, as it allows you to work with or against a friend, but as a one-player game, Cabal is still worth a look.

ALEX

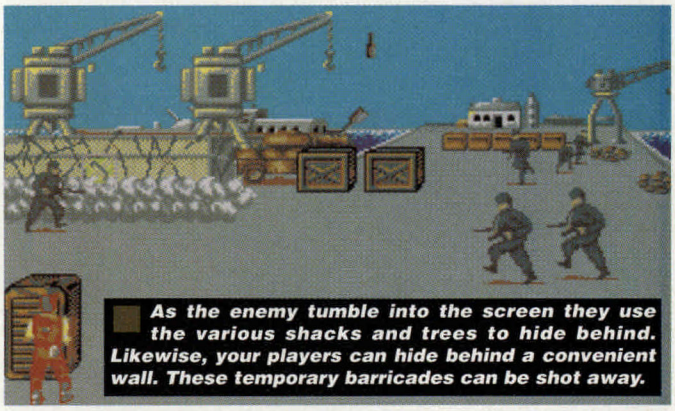
Following in the vein of Operation Wolf and Thunderbolt, Cabal offers a good blast to relieve the tension. Although the graphics aren't as good as the aforementioned, it is far more enjoyable to play. The difficulty is set at just the right level, allowing the budding Green Beret to advance at a steady pace. Cabal is at its best when used for a quick massacre, especially if you play with a fighting friend!

OVERALL RATING

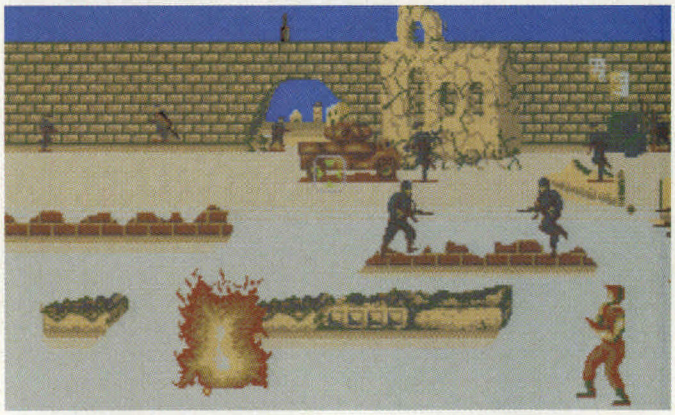
74%



Before each stage begins, you are shown a rough guide as to what to expect, culminating in a confrontation with a massive `super-weapon`.

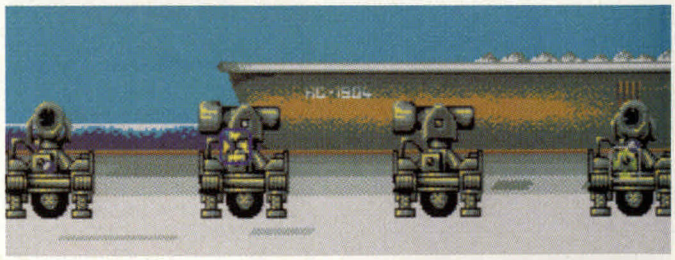


As the enemy tumble into the screen they use the various shacks and trees to hide behind. Likewise, your players can hide behind a convenient wall. These temporary barricades can be shot away.





(Above & left) The number of enemy left before a level is complete is depicted as a blood-red bar at the top of the screen. Everytime a soldier is shot or a tank or helicopter is blown up, the bar creeps slowly to the right, until it eventually is shown as full and the two characters - totally out of character - dance joyously upscreen.



The end-of-level `super-weapons` appear in the form of tanks, helicopters and cannons, and must be destroyed in the same manner as you would to complete a level. As you pound countless bullets and grenades into it, you must avoid its deadly firepower until it eventually explodes.

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STAR FLIGHT

Star Flight puts the player in command of an interplanetary ship, a six-man crew - and the galaxy is his oyster.

Starting from scratch, the player must select his crew from the available life-forms, matching their inherited abilities with the specialised skills which are needed. The ship needs a doctor, a navigation officer, communications expert, scientist and, of course, an engineer. Unfortunately, there doesn't appear to be a race of drunken Scotsmen to choose from! Your next problem is to select the design of your ship with the limited money you have available. Armour, shields, engines and fuel must all be picked from the spaceport manuals. Of course there are always bigger and better electronic gizmos which would make life easier, but these can only be obtained later when you return from your explorations with the rare ores and alien artefacts which can be exchanged at the company trading store for hard cash.

An explorer's life is never easy. The space-lanes are littered with the wrecked ships of the untrained crews who have boldly gone before you. Training your crew might be an expensive, but wise precaution that you should consider before pointing your nose at the Andromeda system. Just as in real life, there are a lot of bad guys out there waiting to attack any wet-eared amateur crew who might fly by with a cargo of ore. Fire before you see the green of their eyes might be a good strategy, but that would mean you would lose the chance to meet up with friendly lifeforms who could bring joy, harmony and 'lotsa' gold into your life.

Under your control, the crew must navigate the galaxy, select a likely planet and descend to the surface. Transferring to a land vehicle, you may now move around the surface, picking up ores and other valuables. Successfully evading pirate ships enroute, it's back to the Old Trading Store to cash up. Selecting more 'go-faster' stripes for the ship, and a course of training for old Bones, should soon see you heading for the wide black yonder.

The game's purpose is for the player to build up his bank balance, all of which makes it a mind-game rather than a contender for the 'ELITE' crown. Attempts have been made to 'beef up' the sound and graphic aspects, but they are not intended to be the game's strong point. Through a small window you will guide the icon representing the ship through the surrounding planets. Enemy ships can also be viewed in this 2D window, as they turn up to test your battle skills, making you twist and turn to evade their attack, but it's very simplistic stuff. Once in orbit around a new planet, your Navigation Officer will run tests giving you data on the planet's makeup. From a spinning, colour-coded view of the planet you can select a landing spot and descend to the surface. If you have studied the manual carefully you will be able to select the likeliest planets and the best areas to find mineral wealth - all of which will enable you to outfit your ship for even deeper exploration.

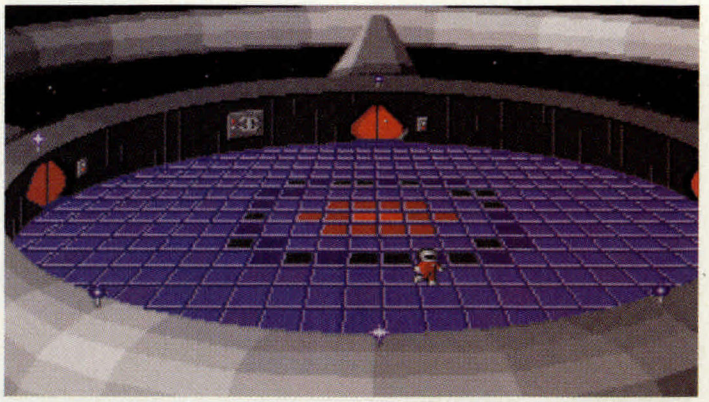
ANDY

Once you get over the 8-bit presentation, it's got that addictive quality that all strategy games do possess. It's not a game that's going to have a big effect on the mainstream player, but I can see 'Trader' enthusiasts being well pleased with it. I still believe that there is a fortune waiting for the company who can combine the strategy of this genre with the sound, graphics and excitement that the machine is capable of.

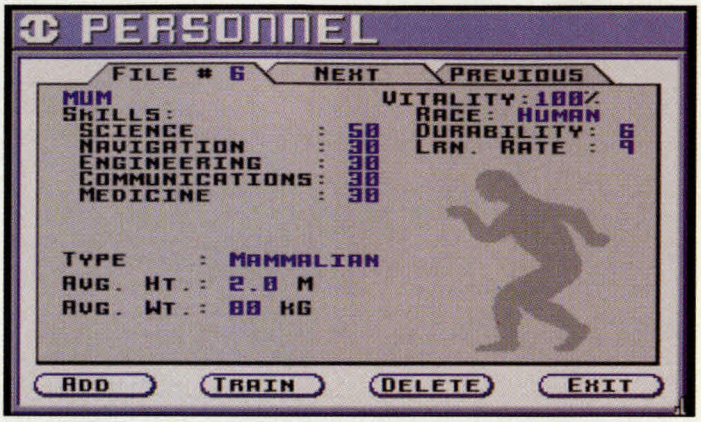
SOUND

Beeps and splonks are the order of the day. Yet again, someone decided that thinking is best done in comparative silence.

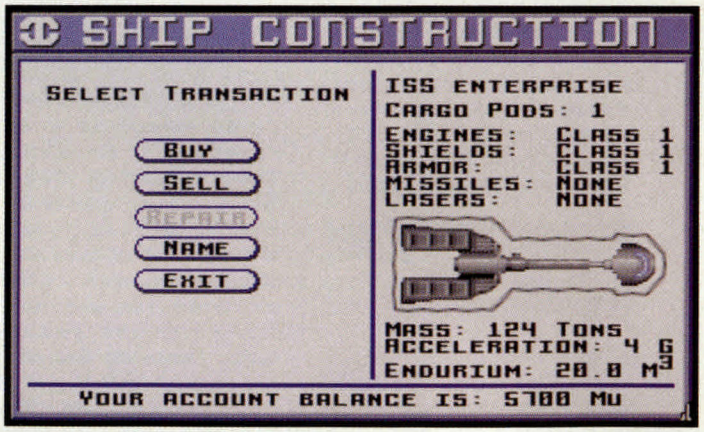
58%



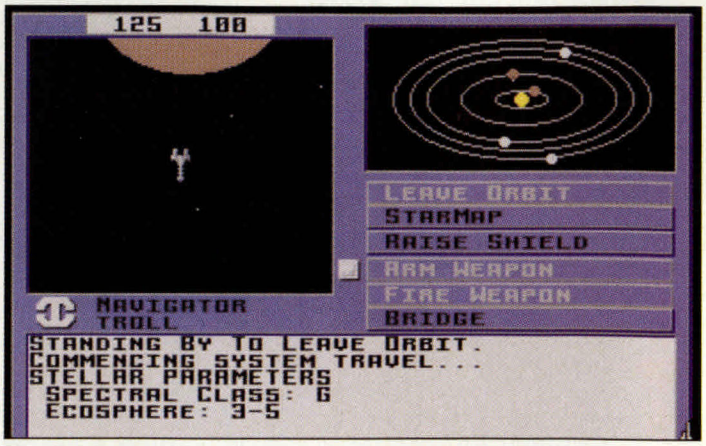
This is the space station's Operation Control Centre. Here is where you must select your crew and your ship. It's also the nearest bank for a squillion miles.



Personnel files listing the skill levels for the various races. Choose your species to suit the task required. Be careful to avoid picking species who hate each other to share the same crewspace.



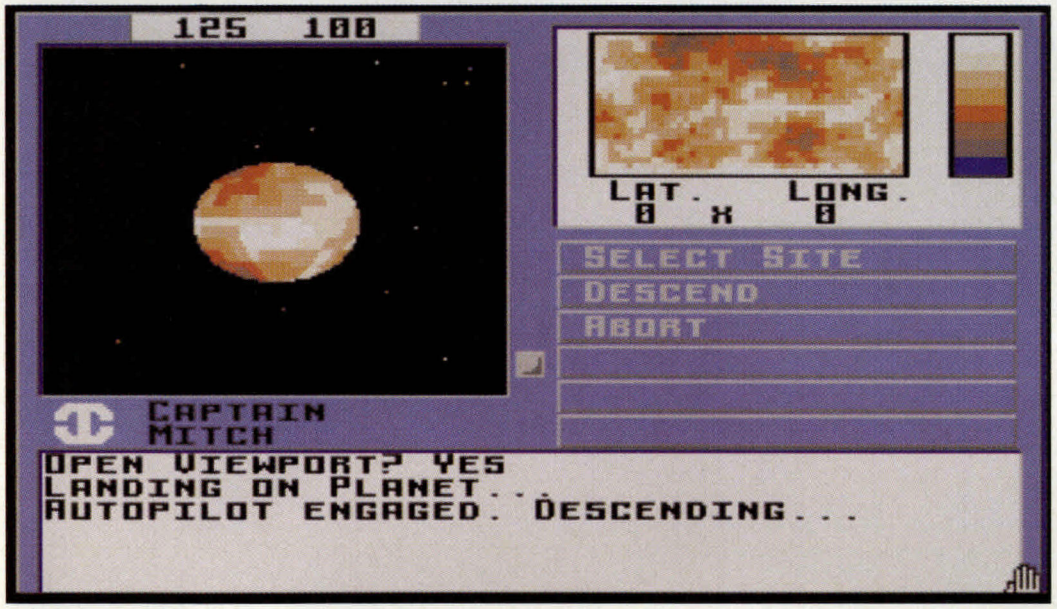
Choose the ship's construction which suits your ideal space trader. You will, of course, need lotsa money to be able to afford the heavy weaponry. Maybe just this time we'll settle for some go-faster stripes.



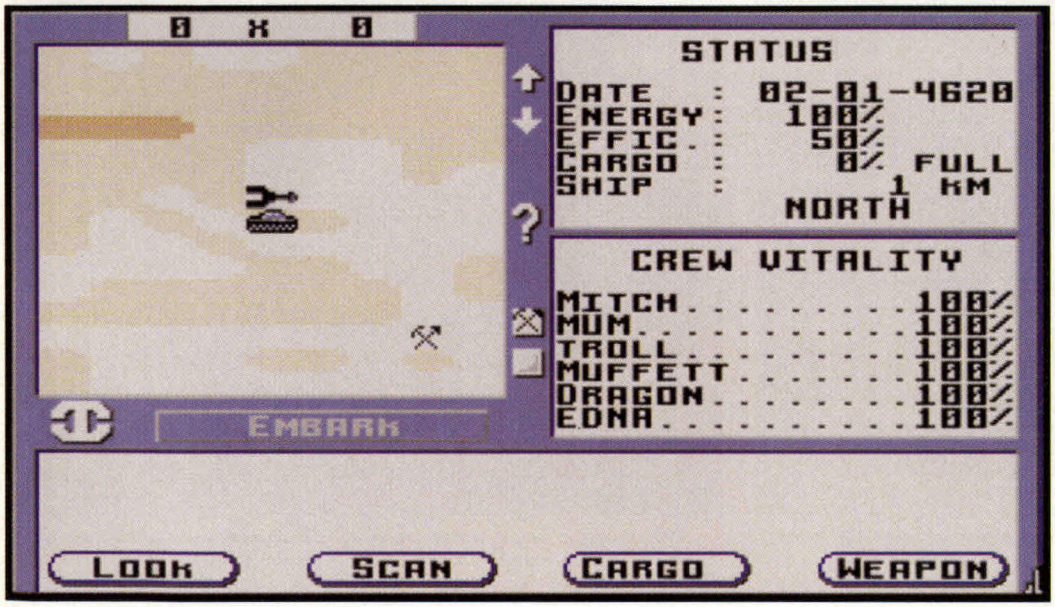
Our trusty ship pulls away from home base and begins inching out of the solar system, heading for black space.



The galactic map is a copy of the paper map supplied with the game. The colour-coded stars give the trained navigator a good idea where rich pickings are to be found.



Having selected a suitable landing site from the terrain map the ship heads downwards under automatic pilot.



Icons representing your land crawler and ship are displayed on a map which can be 'zoomed' around the nearby terrain. Further icons are to be found representing ore and alien artefacts.

OVERALL RATING

64%

SK

This game missed the boat. It promised so much and delivered so little. Here we have a space exploration game, fighting aliens... etc. But do we get a 3-D space battle? No, we get instead a very simplistic 2-D fight sequence. The idea of multiple crew members, each with their own speciality, appealed to me, as did the idea behind the game. I like these start trader/fighter games. The implementation, however, didn't live up to expectations: it looks for all the world as if it had been ported from an eight bit machine with the graphics upgrade. Even then, they weren't anything to write home about.

DOUG

Star Flight is a very good game, and although the presentation tends to give the impression of an 8-bit conversion with slightly better graphics, in my opinion it doesn't really matter. Admittedly it would be a lot better with upgraded graphics, but it's still very good, and I can see it being a cultish type of game.

GRAPHICS

Adequate for the type of game, but nothing more than could be found in a similar 8 bit scenario. Like a book, this game's action tends to take place in your mind's eye rather than on the screen.

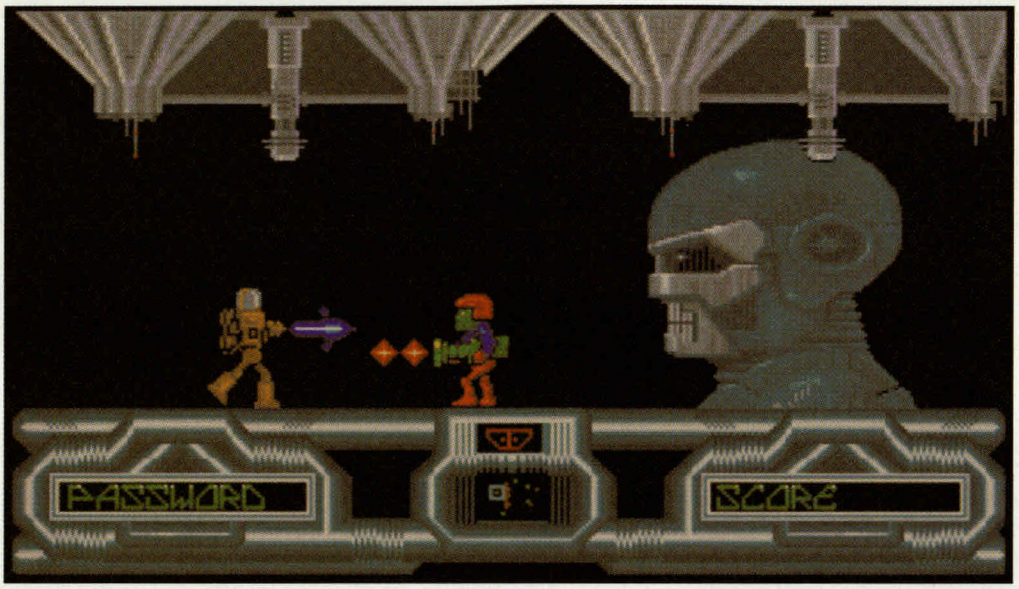
62%

Real Soon Now!

(Adopts Michael Caine voice) Not a lot of people know this, but our esteemed Editor, Steve Merrett, is a bit of a closet programmer. And now, it looks as if he is set to release his first game. Steve has been involved with the games scene ever since he first bought a VCS when he was ten. Since then, he has owned a succession of machines, including Spectrums, 64s, Amstrads, Segas, PC Engines, Vic 20s, and STs, before joining ST Action and eventually editing the mag you are reading now. During this time, he hasn`t really put his mind to programming, and it wasn`t until he took a trip up to Ocean last October that he thought about writing a game. While at Ocean, he got chatting to Lost Patrol graphics man, Ian Harling, and put forward a few ideas for a game he has always wanted to write, and Ian was sufficiently impressed to knock together some graphics for him. The original idea for the game was a massive arcade romp set over several hundred screens, but as seen in old games, such as the ancient Strangeloop and Sorcery +, they decided that having plenty of colourful screens doesn't make up for boring gameplay, so instead they went for the 'squeeze as much in as possible' route.

With the busy schedule of Amiga Action, Steve hasn`t been able to devote as much time to the game as he would have liked, but recently he took a few days off to visit Ian, and together they started preparing their master plan. The game, a massive arcade-adventure with a variety of sub-games, is tentatively called Fooell`s Gold, and follows the adventures of a small golden robot called, unimaginatively, Gold, as he searches for caches of booty in a supposedly deserted spaceship. Gold is the property of a miserly Mr. Fooell, a well-known money-grabber who makes his money by looting cargo-bearing spaceships that have been destroyed when passing through war zones. These zones are too dangerous for humans to enter as they will be picked up on by the warring planet`s heat-seeking scanners. But robots can enter undetected, thus the reason for Fooell`s massive collection of scavengers. Naturally enough for a penny-pinching bad guy, Fooell treats his staff badly, and after a particularly nasty clump around the ear, Gold was inadvertently brought to life. Now, with so many riches at his feet, if our metallic hero can make his way through the alien-infested spaceship and earn enough money to enter the gun turret situated at the top, he will be able to take his revenge on the evil Fooell and free his friends.

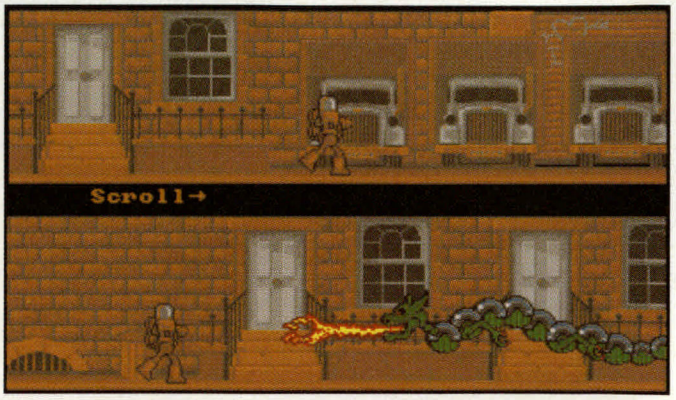
So far, roughly 60% of the game is complete, with the oh-so-cute Gold wandering through the many screens that make up the spaceship. Inhabiting these stages is a multitude of aliens, all of which prove deadly to our little hero. Luckily, though, Gold is armed with an upgradeable laser; but upgrading costs money, and it could prove wiser to save your dosh for the later stages - in particular, for passing the door to the gun turret. Each



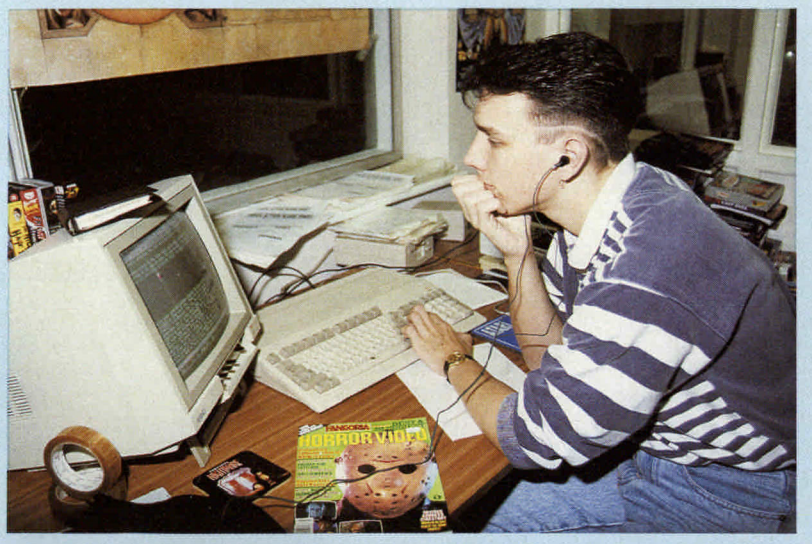
These sprites may be changed at a later date, but this screen shows you the style of the main game task. Gold stomps from room to room, and the aliens emerge from the organic walls Ian is adding (not shown in this screen). Armed with whatever weapons he can afford to buy, Gold must blast the aliens and collect the caches of money that the aliens hide. By the way, the large head to the right of the screen is, in fact, a lift to the next deck and opens to one of the ten sub-games. This, too, will be made to drip with slime and look more organic.



One of the larger guardians from the second level. Each level features its own `look`, and the second level is based around insects and their cultures. Spiders scuttle along, harrassing both the aliens and you, and they can even pluck you off the ground and web you up - although by concentrated shooting at the top of the web, you can break your bonds. As another of Steve`s unreasonable demands, Ian is currently adding some honeycombed wall, complete with wriggling larvae to this level - he`s such a hard taskmaster, our Ed!



The dynamic duo are hoping that the sub-game shown here will actually make it to the final version. Shown here in its dropped two-player mode, it is a Great Giana Sisters-style platform romp with numerous aliens and collectable bonuses. Of all the sub-games, this one is Steve`s personal fave. He is a great fan of the now-banned Giana Sisters, and likes to think of this section as a tribute to Rainbow Arts` classic.



(Above) Editor, would-be game designer, lad-about-town and general rabble-rouser, Steve Merrett (this was taken before all the worry took its toll! - Steve). Originally, he wanted a massive game based around the film Aliens, as he wasn't impressed with the previous licences. However, things have changed and the game features a number of other films, too.

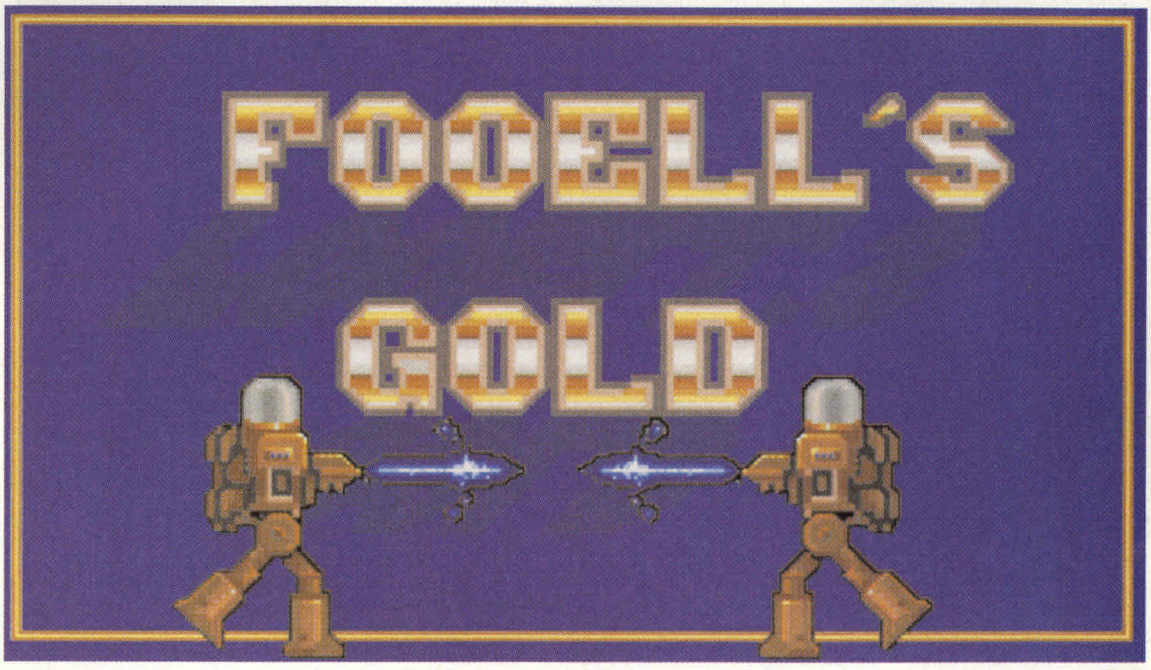


(Right) Lost Patrol and Esoterror graphics man, Ian Harling looks bemused as he wonders how he is going to cram all the graphical features Steve wants into the game`s memory. Considering Steve's plentiful ideas, Ian has to be realistic and decide what is feasible or not. In fact, there was much disappointment when they had to drop a massive 3D section due to memory limitations. Although, they are aiming to make a complete game of it at a later date.

of the twenty-five stages features its own style of graphics, and as you go deeper into the ship, the traces of alien habitation become stronger. Steve is a great fan of the film, Aliens, and wanted the same style of organic resin to adorn the walls. On the screenshots shown, unfortunately the finished effect isn`t shown, but Ian has coped marvellously with Steve`s demands and the finished backdrops feature growth made up out of dead people and various alien secretions - in fact, on entering a screen, Steve and Ian are hoping to have enough memory to show the aliens actually producing the stuff and slapping it on the wall!

Before access to the later decks can be made, Gold must take part in one of the ten sub-games the game contains. These sub-games are all variations on popular themes, and amongst the games ideas were `borrowed` from, were Xenephobe, Operation Wolf, and StarRay. Ian is also putting together some graphics for a 3D-based sub-game in the vein of a car-racing game, but whether they will squeeze it in is doubtful. Likewise, plans for a sequence in which you had to battle through swarming hordes of robotic spiders, worms, and the like, as they appeared on the horizon. However, despite a lot of late nights and some very impressive update routines, it was decided that it would compromise the gameplay too much, and thus had to be dropped. All of the sub-games are important for the completion of the game, as you will be rewarded with a letter each time you complete the small task, and all ten letters are linked to pass the final barrier to the gun when you have earned enough cash to enter the turret.

With other work obligations stopping the game progressing as quickly as they would like, Steve and Ian are having to work on Fooell`s Gold whenever they can. The game`s graphics that are shown here are at a very early stage, but already they are shaping up nicely. Ian is currently hoping to get enough time to add some more features and obstacles to the ship`s decks, and Steve is continually chipping in ideas at their `brainstorming` meetings. At present, nobody is lined up to publish the game, but both Steve and Ian are confident that the long-term task and varied gameplay of Gold will interest some companies. Since beginning work on Fooell`s Gold, Steve the Ed has been unbearable, so let`s just hope that something happens to it!



An early mock-up of the game`s title screen. In the final version, it will feature robots that dance to the game`s title music. Also, the boys had hoped to have them juggle, but once again the dreaded memory restrictions were a damp squib on their imaginative ideas.

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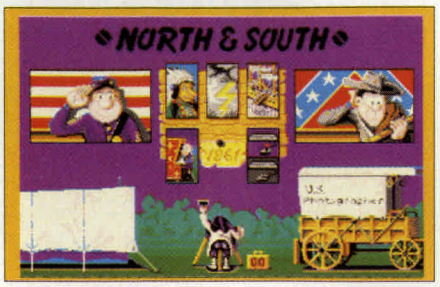
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AMIGA ACTION SCORE SHEET

TO BE FILLED IN BY ALL REVIEWERS

Game name: .....
Software House: .....
Reviewer: .....
Date of review: .....
Notes to the editor: .....
.....

VERY IMPORTANT: TAKE TIME TO FILL THIS OUT VERY CAREFULLY!

- GRAPHICS -

	VG	Good	Ave	Bad	VB
• Use of colour.....	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
• Detail.....	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
• Graphic originality.....	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
• Smoothness.....	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
• Quality of animation.....	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
• Variety of graphics	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
• "Wow" factor	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
• Speed of movement.....	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐

- SONIX -

	VG	Good	Ave	Bad	VB
• Music overall (x2)	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
• Effects originality	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
• Effects variety.....	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
• "Wow" factor.....	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐

- GENERAL -

- Addictiveness %..... ☐
- Lasting appeal %..... ☐
- Overall gut feeling%..... ☐

This score sheet is one the key to the Amiga Action scoring system. Each reviewer fills out one of these sheets for each game they review. The sheet breaks down all the elements of a game and reduces the reviewers decision to a simple good, 1-5 score, this helps take the guess work out of scoring things like animation or use of colour. Combined with this analytical approach is a "gut feeling" score, the two results are combined using a special piece of computer software which calculates the final scores. Space is also provided on the sheet for making notes to the editor and for details like the price of the game and the software house. And thats it really! As you can see we dont just throw darts blindfold like other magazines - it's your hard earned money at stake - we don't leave anything to chance!

Here at Amiga Action, we take our games very seriously indeed. You have probably heard that from other magazines that only review six or seven games an issue, but here at Amiga Action, we mean it. Whenever a game arrives in the office, the person most suited to review it is immediately sent off into the corner to play it fully. For instance, it would be no good giving our adventurers, Mitch and Steve Kennedy, a shoot'em-up, because rumour has it they don't even own a joystick between them! That person then doesn't emerge from his corner until he has totally analysed the game and written the main review, complete with totally descriptive captions. After that, the other two reviewers are banished to their individual corners, and also play it for a hours on end before writing their comments. After that, the jolly trio then discuss the various merits of the title, play it in two-player mode (if applicable), and eventually come up with a score for the graphics, sound and its overall percentage.

Our reviews are split into three main sections: the body text which describes the game's scenario and basic features and where the scores are shown; individual comments from three reviewers which list particular features we were impressed by or faults we loathed, as we think it is vital to have more than one person as quite a lot of the time, and often there are a lot of violent arguements about them. Finally, there are the captions, which we feel can give a better description of the games than boring old body text waffle. Basically, we offer the most concise review system there is, and, as far as we can see, there isn't a single loop-hole in it.

If you have already flicked through the mag, you may have noticed that we don't score games quite as highly as our rivals. This is because we don't see the point in giving a particular genre 99% when next month something may appear that is even better - do we then give that game 100%? This way, we can sort the men from the boys. If a game scores over 80% - or even makes it into the 90's - in Amiga Action, then you can be sure that it is a must buy, and if a game scores less, then you should read the comments to see what was wrong with it. The whole process is very complex, but we feel that this way we are making sure that you, the readers and game-buying public, are getting the best information going. Remember: if a game scores over 80% in Amiga Action, then we will put our logo to it. What more of a garauntee could you ask for?

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